





LETTERS·FROM·THE·EAST.



BY

WILLIAM·ARNOLD·BROMFIELD.

# LETTERS

FROM

EGYPT AND SYRIA,

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD,

II

M.D., F.L.S., &c.



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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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The letters which compose this volume, are the unstudied communications of a Brother to a Sister—written for no other eye than hers, and printed solely with the hope of affording gratification to those by whom the character and talents of the lamented writer were well known.

There are some among his friends, more devoted to antiquarian pursuits than himself, who may not concur in many opinions which he has expressed concerning Egyptian antiquities; but these, being his own convictions, which he was too candid to conceal, can be perused only with kind and generous feelings.

The letters, written amidst the inconveniences and hindrances of Eastern travel, contain, with a few notes appended to them, all that remains of the writer's descriptions of his journeyings in Egypt, Nubia, and Palestine, until within a few days of his arrival at Damascus, where it pleased God that they should terminate with his life.

2



## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS OF THE LETTERS.

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### LETTER I.

	PAGE.
Voyage to Gibraltar . . . . .	1—3
The Rock and Town . . . . .	4—5
Malta—the Lazaretto . . . . .	8—13
Harbour of Alexandria . . . . .	14—15

### LETTER II.

Alexandria—scenes and sounds in—Nile water cisterns	17—18
The Date palm . . . . .	19
The City—its dilapidations and dogs . . . . .	20—21
Pompey's Pillar . . . . .	22
The English Church . . . . .	23
Local Mortality—its causes . . . . .	25

### LETTER III.

Passage from Alexandria to Cairo . . . . .	27
Mahmoudieh Canal . . . . .	27—28
Landing a Passenger . . . . .	28
Khereddin Pasha . . . . .	29—30
Population and sombre scenery of Delta . . . . .	30—32
Cairo—Shepherd's British Hotel . . . . .	33
The running footmen, I. Kings, 18—46 . . . . .	38
The donkey and camel—the streets . . . . .	36—39

### LETTER IV.

Route from Cairo to the Pyramids of Ghizeh . . . . .	40—43
Site and structure of the Pyramids . . . . .	44—47
Perpendicular appearance of on a near view . . . . .	47
Ascent of Cheops . . . . .	48
View of the Nile valley from Cheops . . . . .	49
Arab race upon the Pyramids . . . . .	50
Interior and passages in Cheops . . . . .	51—53
Cephrenes and its court . . . . .	54
Belzoni and Vyse Pyramids . . . . .	55
Importunity of Arab guides . . . . .	53—54
The Sphinx . . . . .	55—56



## CONTENTS OF LETTERS.

## LETTER V.

PAGE.

Cairo—Preparations for voyage up the Nile . . .	57
Valuable Library of the Egyptian Society . . .	58
Visit to mosques . . . . .	58
Christians of both sexes admitted . . . . .	59
Note of Lithograph of the Great Pyramid . . .	60

## LETTER VI.

On the Nile—the boat and crew . . . . .	61
The Barrage . . . . .	62—63
Rhoda—the locality of Exodus, 2. 1—9. . . . .	64
Villagers and dovescotes . . . . .	65—66
The British in Egypt . . . . .	66
Accident to Mr. Lakes . . . . .	67—68
Plague of flies, &c. . . . .	68

## LETTER VII.

Winter frost and ice at Rhodah, latitude 28° . . .	70
Sugar factories at Minieh . . . . .	70—71
Seven days forced labour . . . . .	71
Modern Egypt according to prophecy . . . . .	71
Steam engines, &c. on the Nile . . . . .	71
Manfalout—an Egyptian boy . . . . .	73
Arnout soldiery . . . . .	74
Ameen and his brother . . . . .	75
Limestone barrier of the Nile valley . . . . .	75
Jackalls, and vegetation of valley . . . . .	76
Universal brown hue of Egypt . . . . .	77—78
Siout—manufacture of pipe bowls at . . . . .	79
Sepulchral excavations on western cliffs . . . . .	79
Visit to the Siout Bazaars . . . . .	80

## LETTER VIII.

Ekhmein, December 12th. Coldness and force of the north	
wind . . . . .	81—82
The darabatakako . . . . .	81
Girgeh . . . . .	83
Antique coins, &c. on sale . . . . .	84
The Doum palm, first seen . . . . .	85
Scenery of Nile valley . . . . .	86
Crocodiles seen . . . . .	87—88



# CONTENTS OF LETTERS.

ix.

## LETTER IX.

PAGE.

Kenneh . . . . .	89
Scarcity of plants in seed . . . . .	—
Berber songs to the drum . . . . .	90

## LETTER X.

Kenneh—scenery of the Nile . . . . .	91
Guinea—corn harvest . . . . .	—
Products of the valley . . . . .	92
Manufacture and rafts of Gullahs . . . . .	93
Date groves . . . . .	94
Temple of Dendereh . . . . .	95
Economical arrangements of Nile boat . . . . .	96—97
Luxor—coldness of the night and dawn . . . . .	98

## LETTER XI.

Luxor—its obelisk, hovels and colossi . . . . .	99—100
Dendereh and Luxor compared . . . . .	100
Rude and primitive character of buildings at Karnak . . . . .	102
Enthusiasm in description equals untruth . . . . .	103
Critique on popular views of the zoology and vegetation of the Nile . . . . .	104—105

## LETTER XII.

Tropic passed at Kalabshee . . . . .	106
Native love of country . . . . .	107
Products of the land of Cush : Khenna, &c. . . . .	108—109
Characteristics of local population . . . . .	109
First cataract . . . . .	110
Notes on drying plants . . . . .	—
Contrast between cultivated and native plants . . . . .	111
Subtropical or midland European flora . . . . .	111—112
Birds and insects mostly akin to British . . . . .	112
Coldness of morning and evening, and its cause . . . . .	114—115
Desert views from the boat . . . . .	114
Remarkable proof of atmospheric dryness . . . . .	115
Korosko—the depot of caravans for Cairo . . . . .	—

## LETTER XIII.

Caravan journey from Wady Halfeh . . . . .	117
Low morning temperature of the desert . . . . .	—
Effects of scorpion sting . . . . .	117—118

	PAGE.
Colossal statues—Isle of Argo . . . . .	118
A soft fall after a hard ride . . . . .	119
Camel riding—its advantages . . . . .	120
Napata, the city of Candace, Acts viii. 27 . . . . .	121
Pyramids of Neuri and their porches . . . . .	122
Nights under the open sky . . . . .	123
Table of temperature at noon . . . . .	124
Metummeh . . . . .	—
Khartoun—welcome at . . . . .	125
Christian temple—ruins at Gebel al Gazal . . . . .	126
Sketch of the birds of Soudan . . . . .	127
Plants of ditto . . . . .	—
Effects of camel-riding on linen . . . . .	128

## LETTER XIV.

Reflections on the poverty of the Nubian peasantry . . . . .	129
Security of property . . . . .	130
Hippopotami seen above Berber . . . . .	131
The crocodile more fearful than formidable . . . . .	132

## LETTER XV.

Return voyage to Cairo . . . . .	133
Passage from Khartoun to Berber . . . . .	134
Pyramids of Meroe . . . . .	135
Illness of Mr. Lakes . . . . .	133—5—6
Arab doctor's treatment of him . . . . .	137
His death and interment . . . . .	138—9
Friendly aid of Coptic christians, &c. . . . .	139
Merchant adventurers a degraded class . . . . .	140
Respectability of British residents . . . . .	140
Private society at Khartoun . . . . .	—
Turkish morality . . . . .	141
Comfortless death of Mr. M. on the desert . . . . .	142
Privations and desolation on the desert . . . . .	143—144
Reservoir of rain water . . . . .	145
Description and comfort of the zemmzemeer . . . . .	145
Scanty and inferior supply of food . . . . .	146

## LETTER XVI.

Descent of the first cataract . . . . .	149
Ruins of Komoomba—Phille . . . . .	150

# CONTENTS OF LETTERS.

xi.

	PAGE.
The British flag a sanctuary for conscripts . . .	151
Plans for the tour in Syria . . .	—

## LETTER XVII.

Temperature in north wind and upon water . .	153
Sand storms and their causes . . .	154
Zobah or Sand pillar . . .	—
Occasional storms of rain . . .	—
Display of meteors . . .	—
Factory chimneys and obelisks . . .	155
The Galliode . . .	156
Ruins of Medinet Habou . . .	156—7
The Memnonium . . .	157
The vocal Memnon . . .	158
Tombs in Theban mountains . . .	159
Critique on Egyptian architecture and painting . .	160
Sober estimate of the latter . . .	161—3
Historical value of the tombs . . .	163
Inscriptions of visitors . . .	—
Prospect from Theban mountains . . .	164
Grottoes of Assaseef . . .	—
Karnak by moonlight . . .	165—6
Second visit to Denderah . . .	167
Salutary effects of radiation of heat by night . .	168
Progressive temperature from sunrise to sunrise . .	169
El Bahr . . .	170
Prevailing dulness of sky and land . . .	171—2

## LETTER XVIII.

Frequency of eye disease . . .	173
Desert Arabs free from it . . .	173—174
Deficient supply of animal food . . .	175—8
Cattle of Nubia and Egypt . . .	176
The water Buffaloe . . .	—
Endurance of heat by cattle . . .	177
Compulsion of donkeys to drink . . .	—
Fruits of Lower Egypt . . .	179
Sycomore a doubtful native . . .	180
Fulfilment of Isaiah xix. 6. 7. . . .	181
Scarcity of aquatic plants in Egypt . . .	—
Awful evidence of the spoilers of Egypt . . .	182

## LETTER XIX.

PAGE.

Ingratitude of Arab and Berber races . . .	183
Improvements in Cairo . . . . .	184
Moslem respect for Protestant consistency . . .	—

## LETTER XX.

Journey from Cairo to Suez . . . . .	185
Tomb of Malek Adel . . . . .	—
Station houses . . . . .	186—7
Solitary tree . . . . .	187
Desert plants . . . . .	—
Peculiar donkey shoe . . . . .	188
Loss of one, without means of supply . . . . .	—
Night rencontres with camels . . . . .	189
Wayside skeletons of ditto . . . . .	190
Refreshing influence of north wind by day . . .	—
Mirage, and real blue line of Red Sea . . . .	191
Suez, a night on board the Akbar . . . . .	192—3
Considerations upon Israel's passage of Red Sea .	193—4
Tradition and modern opinion—Klysmā . . . .	195
Saline deposits on soil around Suez . . . . .	196
Return journey to Cairo . . . . .	197
Deception of a sick child—mirage . . . . .	—
Excursion to Toorah Quarries . . . . .	197
Fickleness and distrustfulness of Arabs : . . .	197—8
Resulting from the uncertain value and great variety of Arab currency . . . . .	198—9
Facts on scarcity of money . . . . .	200—1
Hatching-ovens . . . . .	201
Memphis and its debris . . . . .	202
Pyramids of Saccareh . . . . .	202
Their structure . . . . .	203
Ibis mummy pits . . . . .	204
False pyramid in Upper Egypt . . . . .	204
Visit to Nilometer at Rhoda . . . . .	205

## LETTER XXI.

Excursion to On . . . . .	205
Scenery around Cairo . . . . .	206
Tombs of Mamaluke Kings . . . . .	—

# CONTENTS OF LETTERS.

xiii.

	PAGE.
Palaces of Abbas Pasha . . . . .	207
Forced labour on his works . . . . .	207
Blindness and squinting prevalent . . . . .	—
Temperature of the season . . . . .	208
Obelisk at On . . . . .	209
Desert border the site of ancient cities . . . . .	209
Popular contempt of the Pharoahs . . . . .	209—10
Identity of Balsam of Mecca and Storax . . . . .	210
Sycamore of holy family at Matereeh . . . . .	210—11
Garden at Shoobra, and mode of irrigation . . . . .	211
Egyptian fruits, trees, and shrubs ; Khenna leaves, use of . . . . .	212—13
Fruits—deficient cultivation of . . . . .	214—15
Apricots, Mishmush, &c. . . . .	215—16
Variable breadth of cultivation on the banks of the Nile . . . . .	216—17
Petrified forest . . . . .	217
Rigid abstinence of Arabs during Ramadan . . . . .	—
Serpent charms witnessed and vindicated . . . . .	217—20
Singular charm against a serpent's bite . . . . .	221

## LETTER XXII.

Voyage to the Mediterranean . . . . .	221—2
Ramadan, the traveller's woe . . . . .	222—3—7
Scenery between Cairo and Damietta . . . . .	223
Ruins of Zel Basta . . . . .	—
Mounds at Seminood . . . . .	224
Violent overthrow of Egyptian monuments . . . . .	—
Mansoureh . . . . .	224—5
Swimming Snake . . . . .	225
Damietta—its vicinity . . . . .	225—8
Miserable lodging there . . . . .	226—7
Visit to Lake Menzaleh . . . . .	228—9
Accident, and barber surgeon . . . . .	229—230
Causes of lakes of Delta . . . . .	231
Field and ruins of Zoan . . . . .	232—3
Roman remains . . . . .	235
Ineffectual search for Papyrus . . . . .	—

## LETTER XXIII.

The Bougaz . . . . .	236—8—243
El Esbeh . . . . .	239—240

	PAGE.
Scanty flora of rice marshes . . . . .	241
The brighter side of hardship . . . . .	241—242
Former cultivation of inundated lands . . . . .	242
Lodgings among rice bags . . . . .	243
The Bougaz passed . . . . .	244
Retrospect of Egyptian travel . . . . .	244—5
Voyage to Jaffa—Hungarian refugee . . . . .	245

## LETTER XXIV.

Lazaretto—Dr. Kyat . . . . .	246—8
Simon the tanner's house . . . . .	248
Site, gardens and produce of Jaffa . . . . .	249—50

## LETTER XXV.

Journey to Jerusalem—Ramlah . . . . .	251
Summer camps of the Bishop &c. . . . .	252
English church at Jerusalem . . . . .	—
Visit to Bethlehem . . . . .	253

## LETTER XXVI.

Sketch of journey to Beyrout . . . . .	254
Temperature and climate . . . . .	255
Garden cultivation of surrounding country . . . . .	256

---

Memorandum upon Notes . . . . .	257
---------------------------------	-----

## NOTES FOR LETTERS.

<i>Excursion to Jericho and Dead Sea</i> . . . . .	258
The Quarantana . . . . .	259
The Jordan . . . . .	—
Dead Sea, and water-fowl upon it . . . . .	—
Plants on the shores . . . . .	260
Ascent to Mar Saba . . . . .	—
Engedi—heights of . . . . .	261
The Kidron . . . . .	262
The Convent of Mar Saba . . . . .	—
<i>Excursion to Hebron</i> . . . . .	263
Rachael's tomb, &c. . . . .	—
Pools of Solomon . . . . .	264



# CONTENTS OF LETTERS.

XV.

	PAGE.
Paved road into Hebron . . . . .	264
Oak of Mamre . . . . .	—
Hebron still Kirjath Arba . . . . .	—
Snow of 1850 in Holy Land . . . . .	265
Local antiquities and population of Hebron . . . . .	—
Glass works . . . . .	—
<i>Jerusalem to Beyrout</i> . . . . .	266
Nablous, Mount Ebal, &c. . . . .	—
Samaritans . . . . .	—
Sebaste . . . . .	267
Date palm at Gennin . . . . .	—
Esdraelon . . . . .	—
Nazareth . . . . .	—
Traditional period of Joseph's residence in Egypt, &c. . . . .	—
Fair maidens and foul state of Nazareth . . . . .	268
Mount Tabor—its vegetation, &c. . . . .	—
Mount Carmel . . . . .	268—270
Caiffa . . . . .	269
Elijah's cave . . . . .	270
Acre . . . . .	—
Tyre . . . . .	271
Sidon—local fertility, and export trade . . . . .	—
Distant view of Lebanon . . . . .	272
<hr/>	
Preface to Extracts . . . . .	273
Letters of Rev. James Barnett . . . . .	274
Ditto Mr. George Moore . . . . .	278
Postscript . . . . .	280





(Letter I.)

SULTAN STEAMER,  
*at Sea, between Cape St. Vincent and Gibraltar,*

*October 4th, 1850.*

My dear E——

Early to-morrow we shall probably be at Gibraltar, and as the vessel will remain for a few hours only to *coal* before continuing her course to Malta, but little time will be afforded for going ashore, and none left for writing to England. The delightfully calm and now sunny weather enables me to sit down and give you a short account of our progress since we left Southampton, which, till to day, the rough state of the sea would not permit me to do, and even now, the vibration of the vessel, as you will perceive, makes writing not the most agreeable or easy task.

Our number of passengers altogether amounts to about thirty, and we have a very heavy cargo of goods on board. We shall arrive I trust at Malta on Wednesday or Thursday, when I must put myself in

quarantine for three days, until the Government steamer is ready to take me and the Indian passengers to Alexandria, on arriving at which place, we shall be admitted without delay to *pratique*, which would not be the case, if we had *communicated* or gone ashore at Malta.

We had very heavy weather in crossing the Bay of Biscay, a great deal of sea, and a constantly over-cast sky of *whity-brown*, with occasional rain and fog, from which we did not emerge until this morning, in about the latitude of Cape St. Vincent. Nothing could be more dull and dreary than the aspect of sea and sky as we ran down the coasts of Spain and Portugal, of which, from the thickness of the weather we had only occasional glimpses, and very bleak and iron-bound they appeared, but lofty and picturesque, reminding me (I speak of the small range of coast-line off Cape Finisterre), of the coast of Ireland near Cape Clear, wild and rocky in the extreme.

I was far from comfortable all Tuesday and Wednesday, but I have now found my sea-legs and appetite, and all other nautical requisites; the time passes but slowly however, even with my own books, and a very nice little library on board. The weather is delightfully warm and sunny, and all the ladies have come forth from their hiding places, and are enjoying themselves on deck, singing Italian airs to a piano. Our worthy Captain is a great favourite with all on board, his round face glowing with such a high colour and good humour, that it does one's heart good to look at him. The table is not so luxurious and profuse as on board the West India packets, but what is much better, it is good, plain and substantial, with *wine* (port and sherry) and spirits included; champagne twice a week. We have plenty

of room, and the passengers are all disposed to be sociable and pleased with each other, a state of things which can hardly be otherwise with such a Captain to preside over our little society.

Head winds retarded our progress down channel, and afterwards the wind and heavy sea were not in favour of quick progress; on the whole however, we have done very fairly, and our passage hitherto cannot be considered a bad one, although somewhat long. I am told that the passage from Southampton to Gibraltar has been made by the "Sultan" in four days and twenty hours, more than once; the distance is 1142 miles nautical. I have just heard that there is great probability that the quarantine betwixt Malta and Alexandria has been suspended, and that vessels will be at once admitted to pratique at the latter place, if they can procure a clean bill of health from the former; if this should prove true, there will be no necessity for any of our party putting ourselves in quarantine on arriving at Malta, but we can go quietly on shore to our hotel, undisturbed by the fear of having to expiate the deed in the Lazaretto at Alexandria, for I know not how many days. We cannot be sure of this good report being true, till we arrive at Gibraltar, or even perhaps at Malta; but the authorities at Gibraltar will probably be apprized of a relaxation of the lately existing quarantine laws to the eastward.

The weather to-night is quite warm, so that we can sit with pleasure on deck, and the sky is much clearer than on any previous day; although by no means what people picture to themselves of the atmosphere of the south of Spain.

*October 4th, 8 p.m.* The sea is calm as a mirror; our noble vessel making her way fast towards the

entrance of the Strait, with a motion scarcely perceptible below. Unfortunately we shall not arrive at Gibraltar by day-light. We have kept so far out to sea, that the coast of Spain and Portugal has been unseen from the deck, but we are to have a splendid view of the Spanish shore to-morrow, and a good glimpse of Algiers. Had the weather been fine and clear, we should have run close along shore a great part of the way from Cape Finisterre to Gibraltar. As we shall remain on shore for several hours, I hope to see a good deal of the place on this first visit, and will do all I can to find out Major H——'s tomb in the military burial ground, and report on its state for his sister's information.

*Gibraltar, October, 5th.* We arrived here this morning very early, and I was up and on deck, at six o'clock, to admire the magnificent view of the Bay and Rock of Gibraltar, which fully came up to, and I may almost say, surpassed the idea I had formed of it. From arriving so early, our supply of coals had been got in sooner than was anticipated, and the Captain announced his intention of starting for Malta at noon instead of at 2 p.m., so that we had two hours less for going ashore than we had calculated upon. As a permit for ascending the "Rock" could not be had so early from the town-major's office, I gave up all idea of going to the summit this time, and contented myself with perambulating the lower parts of the Rock and the town, and botanizing along the shore between the new and old towns. However, I gained a very considerable elevation, quite sufficient to give me a perfect view of the glorious panorama of sea and land, in surveying which, I found my telescope a most invaluable companion. With what raptures would my dear E—— have looked on the

majestic mountains of Spain, and the vast Atlas range on the opposite coast of Africa, lighted up by a bright sun, with the deep blue of the bay beneath; and how often I wished for her at my side, for there was a dry fresh breeze on the rock that would have made the temperature perfectly supportable, if not almost agreeable to her.

The chief defect of the landscape is the want of wood, which gives an air of nakedness and sameness to the mountains, but they are sprinkled with low bushes and tufted plants which render them not wholly devoid of verdure; whilst the rock itself between the new and old towns is one continued garden. The town is much better built, and far cleaner than I expected; and the Rock on a more extensive scale than I imagined. Very few wild plants were in flower; most of them being either quite burnt up, in seed, or not yet in bloom; nevertheless I found a great many curious species I had not before seen growing, and the garden vegetation has almost as much of a tropical aspect as in the West Indies. The town is a very amusing place, from the endless variety of features and costumes; I remarked many very handsome Spanish faces, such as we see depicted by the old masters, but numbers had very ordinary ones, although fine black eyes are nearly universal. I shall hope to spend a week or a fortnight at this interesting place on my return; as yet, I have only an imperfect idea of Gibraltar. We had a splendid view of the back of the rock, as we rounded Europa Point, a bare, black precipice, totally devoid of vegetation; and immediately the high mountains of Andalusia came into view, part, I believe, of the Sierra Nevada; but a slight haze, and our distance from them, only rendered their outlines visible, which were very fine.



*Sunday, October 6th,* (between Gibraltar and Malta). We are now in the enjoyment of almost tropical weather, careering over the blue Mediterranean at ten knots an hour, with no wind, but with an uneasy swell, sufficient to affect me in a slight degree when sitting erect below to write, as I am doing now. Divine service has just been performed in the saloon; and the whole ship's crew mustered in their best attire; a most copious supply of bibles and prayer-books being distributed on the table from a stock kept on board by the "Company." The chief officer acted as reader.

One of our most active stewards broke his leg this morning in running up a short ladder from the main to the quarter-deck; the foot having caught in between two of the steps, the bone was snapped across by the impetus acquired.

*Monday, October 7th.* Getting on famously, nine and a half knots an hour. Passed Algiers this morning about seven o'clock, but at too great a distance to distinguish anything on shore; we have seen merely a glimpse of the African continent since leaving Gibraltar. The uneasy motion of the sea still continues, and there is no wind to keep the ship steady. The thermometer this morning in the Captain's cabin on deck, was 78 at 9 a.m. The weather since we arrived at Gibraltar, has been like our own in the height of summer, with a sky very similar in aspect, that is, streaked, mottled, and partly overspread with fleecy clouds. To-day the atmosphere is less clear. I cannot perceive the slightest increase of depth in the blue tone of the sky since we left Southampton, although we are nearly 300 miles within that sea so renowned, in popular belief, for the azure purity of its heaven. The starlight too is not a whit more brilliant than with us

on ordinary clear nights. The warmth of the climate is already exerting a most beneficial influence on me; I am in excellent spirits, appetite and digestion perfect; and only long to escape the tedium of the voyage, which, however I contrive to while away very tolerably. There are I find eleven of us going on to Alexandria, but no one excepting myself, will stop in Egypt; the rest are all for Bombay.

*October 8th.* Much cooler to day, very fine, but a good deal of cloud floating in the sky at one time; our speed is increased to nearly eleven knots an hour; the motion of the ship very disagreeable, but no one ill on board. Passed some islands, the largest of which was Galita, all said to be uninhabited, very bare and bleak. Towards evening we neared the coast of Africa, and had a good view of Cape Bona, the highest headland between Gibraltar and Malta. We were not near enough to distinguish any object on shore, and the line of coast though bold, had no particularly foreign or exotic character about it, nor was it invested with that clear transparent atmosphere one hears so much about in the Mediterranean, whose waves however had all the deep azure I remember to have been struck with in 1827. Algiers was sighted in the morning, but at far too great a distance to get even a distinct view of the town. The evening was very clear and calm, but rather cool. We expect to reach Malta to-morrow between 3 and 4 p.m., and, as you may suppose, are extremely anxious to learn our fate, whether it is to quarantine or pratique we are to be admitted. No one will rejoice more than myself to step ashore there, to have a bath, and a cup of tolerable tea or coffee, both of which are scarce luxuries on board packet ships.

Should we be under the necessity of putting ourselves in quarantine, the Lazaretto at Malta is spoken of as by no means uncomfortable quarters, and our term of durance will be past when the over-land mail steamer from Marseilles comes to our relief. It is the being at a place which one is forbidden to ramble over, that makes quarantine in this case so provoking. Our evenings pass off very agreeably, the young ladies being now all recovered from sea-sickness; the piano, which is really a very good one, is in constant requisition, and singing and playing while away the time pleasantly. This voyage is the first I have made in which no cards have been introduced; and although wine, spirits, and other beverages are supplied gratis by the "Company," not one of our passengers has indulged in liberal potations. Lights are put out in the saloon at half-past ten, but the floating wick lamps in the sleeping or state rooms, are allowed to burn themselves out, and usually last till daylight.

*October 9th.* A most beautiful morning, very clear and moderately warm. Malta is now in sight, (10 a.m.) and a few hours will terminate three-fourths of the passage to Alexandria, which we expect to reach on the nineteenth.

*October 10th.* Malta Lazaretto. Our hope of being allowed to take pratique without subjecting ourselves to quarantine at Alexandria has been disappointed, and we were compelled to put ourselves in the latter disagreeable position yesterday, on our arrival in the harbour of Valetta, about three o'clock. Our party consists of twelve, all, except myself, going to India. The quarantine buildings stand on a point of the harbour, isolated from the rest of the town; and consist of ranges of apartments, very lofty, and beautifully



clean, white-washed, and with stone floors, and each room is abundantly supplied with water. The only furniture is a chair or two, a rough wash-hand stand and an iron bedstead. As we are not, properly speaking, in quarantine, but only in the position of persons not holding communication with an infected place, we are not allowed to have any servant to assist us, because were any one coming off from the town to touch us, we should be immediately in quarantine for the full time required to enable us to take pratique on our arriving at Alexandria, that is, ten or fifteen days at least. We must now perform the most menial offices for ourselves, make our own beds, &c., with a guardian ever watching us, whom, if we were to touch, we should be obliged to perform full quarantine from that moment.

The weather is extremely hot still; to day, far warmer than any we have had since we left England, with an almost cloudless sky, the rainy season not having commenced.

Bedding must be paid for here as an extra, but Captain Brookes, of the "*Sultan*," with great liberality, has ordered a quantity of mattresses, sheets, and blankets, to be sent to us from the ship, which he will take back on his return from Constantinople. None of us however could get much rest last night from the incessant attacks of mosquitoes; the only insect annoyance we are exposed to here: we can, it is true, have mosquito curtains by paying for them, but the narrowness of the beds themselves is another cause of discomfort, not to be remedied, and we are fain to put up with our light misfortunes, from which we look forward to be relieved on Sunday by the arrival of the steamer from Marseilles. In our party of twelve, there are only four gentlemen including myself; the rest are ladies,

most of whom are girls, the daughters and nieces of Colonel S—, an officer of the Indian army, returning with his wife to Bombay, a pleasing and gentlemanly man. Mr. P—, a young cadet going out to join his regiment in India, and Dr. F—, are our other associates, and we form quite a sociable and merry party. Our way of living is droll enough, as we must touch nobody, not even the guardian, or the persons who bring us our meals, which are furnished from a *trattoria* close at hand, the owner of which is himself in *pratique*. As an instance of the extreme absurdity of the quarantine laws—although we are strictly forbidden to come in contact with any person employed in conveying food or messages to us poor prisoners, yet we touch and taste fruit, bread, vegetables, &c., which they have handled, and money is allowed to pass freely between us.

*October 11th.* Another charming day, with a delicious breeze on the flat stone or stucco roof of our prison house. The ladies have discovered that there are worse inmates than the mosquitoes in our apartments; but though seriously tormented by the latter, I have not seen the more odious insects in my room. We all slept better last night, but on meeting at breakfast this morning, the fair faces of our female friends bore the appearance of an attack of measles, and my hands and forehead are covered with bites. I endeavoured to exclude the enemy by tying a pocket handkerchief over the whole head and face, and lying completely enveloped in the upper sheet, but the remedy proved worse than the disease, from the heat thus generated, and the hindrance to breathing. The common house-fly swarms about everything eatable, but is not otherwise troublesome; and I have not observed a single blue-bottle. A harmless myriapode, allied to *Scolopendra*, caused great disgust to our young Cadet last night, as

it hurried across his bed ; and we saw whilst at tea one of those large spiders so common in Suffolk and at Hampton Court, called daws or cardinals, but our only real annoyance hitherto has been the mosquitoes.

Our rooms command a fine view of the town of La Valette and the Quarantine Harbour, and the terrace on the flat roof is extremely spacious. There we pass a great deal of our time after sunset, and there I find great amusement at all times with my telescope, which does service *pro bono publico*. We are permitted to have a boat, and row about the quarantine harbour, but our limits are rigidly defined, and we cannot enter the great harbour, which I have not yet seen, but suppose that the “ Medina ” will go in to take passengers off on Sunday at twelve at noon, when, we are told, we shall be released from our not very irksome confinement. We breakfast at nine, dine at three, have tea at seven, and cheat the mosquitoes as long as we can by remaining on the house-top, upon which fortunately we are not prohibited from staying all night, if we think proper, and the temperature then is delicious, nor do the mosquitoes venture so high, at least in any numbers. Our guardian is a good looking Maltese or Italian, more to be pitied than any of us, having nothing to do but to keep guard over us, and to saunter about in the corridor, and on the shore below our castle. The only service he performs is to bring messages oral or written, to place the dishes at meals within reach and yet avoid coming in contact with any of our party. We really (bating the mosquitoes), pass our time of durance very pleasantly, with a brilliant sun ever shining on us, and an exhilarating temperature; and buoyed up with the hope of being within two days from this time winging our way to the land of the Pharoahs, whither we all look forward with impatience to arrive on Thursday next.

Our expences in quarantine will not at the outside amount to more than ten shillings a day for each person, for everything is under Government regulation, and a *price fixed*. We do not hear of any new cases of cholera in the town, excepting a solitary one of two days back.

The view from our windows, verandah, and roof, is very fine, but immeasurably behind that from the Bay and Rock of Gibraltar; for there is here no very bold scenery, and a great deficiency of shadow in the landscape owing to the want of trees. There is not the slightest appearance of the rainy season approaching at present, the temperature at this moment, by the thermometer on the table at 1, p.m., is 73. The houses of La Valetta are of a yellowish white free-stone, and with perfectly flat roofs. The Government House, and the English Church built by Queen Adelaide, are two of the most conspicuous of the public buildings, besides the walls and fortifications which are mantled with caper-bushes, the branches of which, hang gracefully in thick verdant tresses. The fruits supplied us here are very indifferent; the best are grapes, now going out of season, but most of these are thick-skinned and insipid; the peaches very large, hard, and worthless; the only pears we have seen were mellow, but sleepy, as are likewise the apples; the dried figs are good, pomegranates very poor; melons passably good. Our dining table is adorned with large bouquets of flowers, and we received a present of some this morning, all very inferior to English flowers of the same kind, and consisting of only the few following; white and red China roses, (poor of their kind), sweet scented verbenas, heliotrope, and scarlet geranium, each and all of which would be thought very mediocre samples of their varieties with us. I forgot to mention a few dahlias,



good in colour, but smaller than with us. It is not probable that these were the choicest productions of the Maltese flower gardens; yet the two gift bouquets are probably a pretty fair specimen of local cultivation. The potatoes here are excellent, and the growth of the island.

*October 12th.* Another glorious day, after a night of restlessness from our pitiless enemies the mosquitoes, and I am sorry to add, less cleanly, though not more annoying foes. We all look forward to release from prison to-morrow, or on Monday morning at latest. We expect to find it as much warmer at Alexandria, as this place exceeds Gibraltar in that respect; for although in very nearly the same latitude, Malta is surrounded by a sea of higher temperature than the Atlantic, and there is not the same indraught of cool air from the adjacent coasts, or ocean, or from the high mountains of the European or African shores, which keeps Gibraltar comparatively cool. In Malta, the highest land I am told, is not above five or six hundred feet, and there being no wood, and few trees of any size, the glare and heat from the white rocks must be extreme. Of the city of La Valetta, I can of course say nothing, although so close to the main part of it; it seems to be well built, and has a very imposing appearance from the water, but it is not so pretty an object as Ryde when seen from the pier-head. Queen Adelaide's new church is, as I have observed, the most conspicuous building on this side of the town, and its erection is said to have excited the most violent opposition from the Romish priesthood, which is extremely bigoted in Malta.

*Alexandria, October 18th.* We arrived off this place last night, in the Government steamer "Medina" from Marseilles, and entered the harbour this morning at

sunrise, after an unpleasant but not stormy passage: the very uneasy motion of the vessel affecting every one of the passengers, being compounded of pitching and rolling; the worst kind of motion, and there was hardly any wind. The Medina, commanded as she is, by a Lieutenant in the Navy, exhibits a strange mixture of civil and naval arrangements and usages, with nothing like the order, promptness, and care, which one expects to see on Her Majesty's quarter-deck.

We entered the bay of Alexandria under as English a looking sky as one could wish to have to remind one of home; and at Malta, the night of Sunday when we started was much over-cast, but during the passage the weather was uniformly fine. Picture to yourself our bright summer weather, when the heavens are canopied with detached flocculent masses of white, upon a ground of pale blue, and you have the exact idea of the prevailing aspect of the Arabian and Egyptian *mackarel* sky, which is exactly what I expected to find it, and very nearly that of the tropics.

On entering the Harbour of Alexandria, the weather looked very threatening, but cleared off, and became fine and extremely hot all day, with a cool delicious breeze, and fine at night. Judge therefore of my astonishment on rising this morning, to find it pouring with rain, accompanied by occasional claps of thunder, but not very violent: the rain ceased before 10 a.m., and now, (19th at noon), it is both damp and hot, and this makes the mosquitoes very active and troublesome in broad day, which is not often the case: as to flies, I do not find more than in England; not a tithe of the numbers that settled on everything at Malta.

We found all the men of war in the harbour decked out with flags, as we entered yesterday, it being a great

Mahommedan festival; I believe that of Beiram. We saw several magnificent line of battle ships in apparently high order and discipline, from which the Turkish ensign, (the crescent and star), waved conspicuously. The harbour presented a far more animated and crowded appearance than that of Portsmouth, being literally filled with shipping. We were on shore before ten o'clock, and I, who alone of all the party remained at Alexandria, was neither asked for my passport nor compelled to submit to Custom-house examination, but drove quietly off to the hotel, (Ray's), in the Frank Square, heartily glad to escape from the closeness and confinement of our probationary sojourn at Malta, which had quite ruined, *pro. tem.*, the complexions of our lady fellow travellers, three of whom were really very pretty.

I have just learned that the Medina leaves this place on Monday with the English mail via Marseilles, so that I must have this dispatch posted without further delay, and must reserve my account of Alexandria for another letter.

I enclose five little packets of seeds for Mr. Lawrence, to whom remember me.

*October 20th.* Another wet morning, a very heavy shower for an hour or two, and the great Frank Square in which I lodge, covered with pools, or rather immense puddles, which the heat of the sun raises into vapour, and renders the air extremely damp, giving fresh life and vigour to my friends the mosquitôes.

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Believe me,

My dear E——,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter II.)

ALEXANDRIA,

*October 22nd, 1850.*

My dear E——

I dispatched my first communication from this place by the Medina steamer yesterday, and I hope it will be safely received by you in about ten or twelve days.

This morning I called on the British Consul, Mr. Gilbert, and received from him a kind note from Sir Gardner Wilkinson, enclosed under cover with a second to Dr. Abbot, of Cairo, for whom I have an introductory letter. I delivered yesterday Mr. Fagan's letter to the Rev. James Winder, our Chaplain here, who received me very obligingly. I fancy that here, hospitality, in our English sense of the word, is not the order of the day, owing probably not to any want of that virtue in the British residents, but to the difficulties they lie under in its exercise, with their small establishments, and unmanageable Arab servants, from whom punctuality is hardly to be expected, and whose sloth is proverbial.



This hotel, (Ray's), on the Frank Square, is really as comfortable as most foreign houses of the kind on the continent of Europe. I have a very large, airy, and lofty bed-room on the second floor, looking on the great square, boarded, and with a wrought iron bedstead, furnished with mosquito curtains of fine muslin, without which, a night's rest would be an impossibility; the walls papered, a bad and rather unusual plan in a warm climate, as affording harbour for insects, though it imparts an air of cheerfulness and comfort to the otherwise bare walls. The French windows are glazed, with green jalousie blinds outside, and chintz window curtains within; so that in winter, the cold, (which is, I am told much felt at Alexandria, on account of the damp which accompanies it), must be in a great degree excluded. The cuisine is very good: but butcher's meat indifferent, the mutton just tolerable, the beef, I am told, very bad, but this I have not seen yet, and I believe it rarely comes to table: I suspect that in most cases it is buffalo beef, and that I cannot imagine either tender or palatable. I have seen herds of these animals in the streets, and occasionally a few oxen, perhaps of Barbary race, but very different from our British breeds. The Egyptian buffalo is a large creature, with comparatively short horns turned downwards, and is as perfectly quiet and inoffensive as the English ox, and, like that, is used for draught. Poultry and fish are the chief sources of animal diet, with pigeons and various small birds. The poultry is diminutive, and is reared on the flat roofs of the houses: fowls are never seen in the streets, as the swarms of vagrant dogs would give them no quarter. At night the whole town resounds with the crowing of cocks, the incessant barking and snarling of the dogs, and the

braying of innumerable donkeys. The butter here is intolerable, and as well as the milk, is for the most part the produce of the goats which one meets everywhere driven about the streets; I have given up all idea of tasting butter till I get back to dear old England. The water at Alexandria is delivered to the consumers in the city in skins slung across the backs of camels. The appearance of these water-skins is very far from recommending the pure element to thirsty lips: but I have already learned the necessity of not being over nice in anything relating to eating and drinking in Egypt, as far at least as regards the raw material. The water at Alexandria is wholly derived from the inundation of the Nile, which is suffered to flow into the large subterranean cisterns of the ancient city, many of which are still in perfect preservation; and in these cisterns the water is retained fit for use, till again replenished by the succeeding year's inundation. The mouths of these cisterns, looking like wells, may be seen in various parts of the city, and are usually surrounded by a crowd of water-carriers with their camels; the water is either drawn up in leathern buckets, or by a rude water-wheel called a Sa'ckiegeh, having earthen jars fastened around the circumference of the wheel, which is worked by a horse. The soil at Alexandria is impregnated with salt, which is, I presume, the cause of its dreary and absolute sterility, wherever the hand of man has not improved its nature. The great Frank Square is supposed to have been the site of the ancient docks, the soil in which has been raised by continual accumulations from buildings, and perhaps natural deposits, because sea-weed is found at a certain depth below the surface, and during heavy rains water rises through the soil and covers the Square with pools, that

leave on subsiding, by absorption underground, and by evaporation, a saline incrustation, as I remarked after the heavy showers a day or two ago. The Nile water of the old under-ground cisterns is very clear, nor do I perceive any unpleasant taste in it, or find it disagree: but I do not often drink it alone, but mixed with Claret or Burgundy, a wine I prefer to Sherry, which is not good here, and very dear besides. The general price for both French and Spanish wines of all kinds is thirty piastres, about five shillings, the bottle. Marsala alone is much cheaper, only fifteen piastres; pale ale and porter, ten piastres or one shilling and eight-pence the bottle, which is exorbitant, being two-thirds more than the retail price in England. The fruit here is very indifferent, with the exception of a small species of fig, bananas, and dates; the latter are most abundant, there being whole groves of date-palms in different quarters of the city, and hardly a garden, however small, without several of these trees, which are now loaded with their great pendulous clusters of ripe fruit, making a splendid, although somewhat monotonous appearance: the growth of the date-palm being so extremely formal, that every tree looks like a reflection of its next neighbour in a mirror. The date has nothing of the light feathery aspect, and wants the majestic stature of the cocoa-nut, arica, and other tropical palms; here, it seldom exceeds thirty or thirty-five feet, and usually not more than twenty-five; and its rather stiff leaves have a sea-green tint, not the soft bright verdure of more southern palms. I see three varieties of date in the markets, one a large yellow or orange coloured sort, another of a bright red, and a third of a dark purple or plum colour: but the date not being a fruit much to my taste, fresh or dried, I patronize them very little. The

only grapes I have seen here, are a large, oval, fleshy, and insipid fruit, of a muddy opaque white, tinged here and there with red, and looking much like the white grape imported in jars from Lisbon, and so often seen in our shops; but the season of grapes is nearly gone by, so I ought not perhaps to conclude that I have eaten the choicest fruit of the vine, although I am told that very few are good at Alexandria.

To an utter stranger to the East, like myself, Alexandria is an entertaining place, although said to present less of an oriental character than many others. Viewed from a distance, or from the lofty crow's nest on the roof of my hotel, the place has a very imposing appearance. The fine harbour now covered with shipping, the blue expanse of the Mediterranean on the north, and the vast mass of houses in the rear, the numerous country villas of the Franks and wealthier natives in the distance, the large gardens and plantations of date trees which occupy a great space within the walls, and the noble area of the Frank Square on which I am looking down, all lighted up by a bright sun or moon, (for the latter is now at the full), furnish certainly a fine panorama; but not one of these objects will bear the test of a close inspection; a profusion of mortar and whitewash are the elements of all this appearance of splendour. The glare is excessive on every side, there is no shade, no relief from the hot dazzling white of every thing around; the very ground is lime dust, partly derived from the mounds of rubbish that block up every piece of waste or vacant ground, partly from the naturally white calcareous rock of the vicinity. Outside the walls, the most absolute sterility reigns; vast mounds of broken pottery and building rubbish, with scarcely a trace of vegetation: only here



and there a thin wiry grass, (*Cynodon Dactylon*), a few patches of the castor-oil plant, acacias or prickly pear, or a little patch of garden maintained by constant irrigation, meet the eye: but some of the roads leading out of the city eastward, were planted by the late Pasha with acacias, *Acacia lebbeck*, which are now thriving, and within the walls are similar avenues of acacias and tamarisks, but too young to afford much shade at present. The Frank Square is a parallelogram of noble dimensions, and viewed by moonlight looks quite magnificent, but wretched taste and dilapidation are its distinguishing features by daylight: whitewash, falling stucco, plaster, and decaying wood-work, being the materials which light up with such effect at night, or in perspective by day. Between this square and the harbour, is spread a vast labyrinth of intricate streets, lanes, and alleys of wretched houses, densely inhabited by a mixed population of all nations, and of every imaginable costume. Some of the streets are very long and tolerably wide, but most of them are extremely narrow, close, and crooked, but highly entertaining to thread one's way through, amongst the motley groups of human beings, camels, donkeys, and dogs, with which they are absolutely thronged. The dogs here are a serious nuisance from their numbers, and disposition to growl and bark at Frank passengers, between whom and the faithful, they distinguish with great acuteness, never molesting the latter. The race is lean, wolfish, and prick-eared, with long whitish or reddish hair, extremely lazy, lying about in the roads in the sun, and giving themselves no trouble except to fly out and bark at the unoffending infidel, especially if he happens to be on foot. However, they are great cowards, seldom attempting to bite excepting unawares, or at an

advantage; the merely pretending to stoop and pick up a stone, putting them to flight instanter. The dogs inhabiting the towns are less troublesome to strangers than those which haunt the miserable hovels of mud or unbaked brick outside the walls, near which, it is sometimes hardly safe to pass for the multitude of these animals.

In the way of antiquities, there is scarcely anything worthy of notice at Alexandria, although Greek inscriptions are sometimes met with in removing the mounds of rubbish that have been accumulating for ages in and around the city. Of course, I paid a visit to Pompey's pillar, and the two obelisks known as Cleopatra's needles, and I cannot say that I was at all struck with either. The former stands on a desolate hill surrounded by mounds of rubbish, and is as badly executed, and as ill-designed a column as can be; the base is in a very dilapidated state, and the shaft bedaubed in huge black letters with the patronymics of two ambitious aspirants for fame. The obelisks are close to the shore of the harbour, the only one still standing looks as if it could not do so any very great time longer, being supported solely on crumbling blocks of stone, the hieroglyphics with which it is covered are in a great measure obliterated on the two sides most exposed to the sea breeze: those on the remaining faces are in better preservation. A paltry shed, and a guard-house for soldiers, stand close by the erect obelisk, the other lies a short distance off, half buried in the soil. Some fine columns of red granite of Upper Egypt, may be seen lying here and there in the city, that have been dug out in making foundations. There are no fine mosques in Alexandria, but a few of the minarets are interesting in their own peculiar barbaric style of



architecture. None of the convents, or other buildings public or private, have the least pretension to beauty, most of them being white-washed structures of the poorest design, and, in general, extremely out of repair. The harem and palace of the Pasha are imposing in their way, with a rather pretty garden, open to the public, but the palace is quite dismantled, as his Highness very seldom honours Alexandria with a visit, which I do not wonder at, as the place can have little attraction for any one ; nor has the reigning Pasha the same motives as his renowned predecessor for making Alexandria one of his residences, since naval affairs engage but little of his attention, and he has sunk to be the mere vassal and representative of his master the Sultan, who it is rumoured, is far from being satisfied with his administration of affairs in Egypt, and would probably have deposed Albas Pasha, were not his hereditary right to rule the country guaranteed to him by the great European powers.

The only really handsome building in Alexandria, *will* be the English church in the Frank Square, which is *now* advancing although with extreme slowness towards completion. The truth is, the building is on such a scale of magnificence as is vastly disproportioned to the wants of the Protestant population of Alexandria, of which very small community many are not members of the established church, but dissenters, or presbyterians, &c., but who favour the undertaking because they think it preferable to have any Protestant place of worship rather than none at all. The original Government grant was lavished on a design by an English architect, Mr. Wylde, and the walls of the structure built of a most unnecessary thickness, which, together with the quantity of tracery and other ornament, soon

exhausted the funds, and the church, although not yet roofed in, and without the tower, has already cost upwards of four thousand pounds. Subscriptions continue however to come in, although slowly, from persons visiting or passing through Egypt on their way to India, and workmen are always doing something towards finishing the church. Mr. Winder has been about fifteen years in Alexandria, is a very well informed man, and seems to be an Oriental as well as Hebrew scholar. He tells me that the society of Alexandria is very limited, and that he leads a very secluded life, amusing himself, I should suppose, chiefly with his books; for as to any other means of passing time agreeably, neither the social, nor certainly the natural attractions in or about the city, offer the least scope to a permanent resident; for even to a stranger like myself, the objects of interest here are extremely few. Filth, disease, and the most abject poverty, meet you at every step; when you walk out you are everywhere annoyed by the dogs; the glare from the white ground and still whiter buildings and rubbish heaps is excessive, the heat, as you may suppose, not diminished by reflection, and clouds of lime dust; and there is no shade except in the gardens: there has however been a cool breeze during my stay, and the nights have been delightfully fresh and pleasant. The mosquitoes torment you in your apartment without a moment's respite as soon as the sun goes down, and in a less degree during the day. Another enemy, so minute as to be scarcely visible to the naked eye, and which is here called a sand-fly, is very troublesome by the tickling sensation it causes in running over the back of the hands, and by the occasional bite it inflicts, which is like the contact of a minute particle of some ignited matter. The abund-

ance of mosquitoes at Alexandria is probably due to the underground cisterns, of which so many remain in as good repair as in ancient times, and to the vast surface of stagnant, and half fresh, half sea-water of the Lake Mareotis, which is the cause likewise of the fever and dysentery, that in addition to the cholera, (which is again on the increase), are sadly prevalent at this moment in the city. The season, this year, as I learn from Mr. Davidson, the Company's chief agent at Alexandria, has been remarkably sickly, the heat unusually prolonged, and the rise of the Nile somewhat less than it ought to be. After heavy showers the streets are in a puddle, like thick cream, and their extreme *narrowness* hinders the evaporation of the water with which they are sprinkled daily by the water-carriers, and which always keeps them damp as well as dirty. Hence, a low typhus fever is one of the great sources of the mortality in Alexandria, which is so excessive as to amount to one-tenth of the entire population annually, as appears by the returns of the last twenty years. In London the average annual mortality is only one in forty or forty-five of the whole population. Between the 20th and 26th the cases of cholera had increased from two, three, five, to eleven per diem.

\* \* \* \*

Believe me,

My dear E——,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter III.)

SHEPPARD'S BRITISH HOTEL,  
UZBEKIEH, CAIRO,

*October 29th, 1850.*

My dear E——

IN my last letter dispatched from this interesting city, I had not space left for any account of my voyage of thirty hours from Alexandria, which I shall now proceed with, before giving you my impressions of Cairo, of which I have already seen some of the chief lions, including the Pasha himself. The heat, though much below what it is a month earlier, still continues very high for the season, keeping steadily at 80° or 82° during the day; this morning at eight o'clock it was only 78°, and the sun when not veiled as it was yesterday by thin stratified clouds, is scorchingly hot, and the nights are still so warm that a single sheet is an ample covering under the mosquito net, which of course is a necessary evil, as it obstructs the ingress of cool, and the egress of heated air. Captain Lindguist, who has been residing six years at Suez, as an agent of the Oriental company, or Transit administration, tells me,

that when here in ordinary seasons, he is accustomed to have a fire in his office from the 1st of November, and that this year the cold was so long protracted, that he did not leave off fires till the 25th of April, which really seems incredible in this latitude, 30°, and at the sea level. Mr. Trail, late gardener to Ibrahim Pasha at Rhoda, for whom I had a letter and pamphlet from Sir W. J. Hooker, and whom I traced out to his abode at Old Cairo yesterday, informs me, that hoar frost is no uncommon thing here in the winter mornings, and that he has seen ice, (thin of course), formed on pools in the desert; probably more through the brisk evaporation by the wind in this dry climate, than through the actually low temperature of the atmosphere. At present, I do not conceive that the most chilly person in the world would think of a fire in his room without a double distillation of *lily dew* at every pore, from the bare idea; but the temperature will perhaps fall rapidly when it begins to sink, and I am thankful when I look on the warm clothing, flannel waistcoats, &c., which I had the precaution to add to my travelling list on leaving England.

I left Alexandria at 5 p.m. on the 24th, in one of the boats for the conveyance to Cairo of ordinary passengers, (not going to India), and which is tracked by a small steamer that likewise has passengers on board, on the Mahmoudieh canal, as far as Atfeh, where the canal joins the Nile, and where a steamer of a larger size waits to receive the passengers and their luggage, and take them on to Cairo. These boats belong to the Transit administration, which is entirely in the hands of the Pasha. The time of departure was unfortunate, inasmuch as the most interesting part of the trip on the canal to Atfeh was performed in the dark, and indeed



for most part of the night in a thick fog which shrouded from view all that a bright, but rather late rising moon would have revealed of the banks on either side of the canal. Hence, I got no sight of the former situation of Sais, once the capital of the Delta, and the new buildings at Atfeh, the locks, &c., were but dimly caught sight of across the mist which wetted everything on deck, and caused some unpleasant reflections on intermittent or remittent fever to cross my mind occasionally, as a few hours before embarking the heat was very great, and the air now felt chilly as well as damp, and I wished for a great coat in addition to the light clothing I had on, not desiring to be in the cabin below, which was crowded and insufferably close. We arrived at Atfeh before daybreak, and the fog on the river did not clear away till some hours after sunrise. Shortly after leaving Alexandria, we heard a great splashing in the canal, and much stir and vociferation on board the steamer, which caused us novices some alarm, as we imagined that a man had fallen overboard; it turned out to be only the *landing a passenger*, which was accomplished by his divesting himself of every article of clothing, then jumping overboard and swimming ashore, his wardrobe, previously made into a bundle, being flung after him. Our starting point on the Mahmoudieh Canal was about two miles from the hotel; the canal itself is of great width, and a wonderful undertaking, when one considers that it was finished through its entire length of about fifty miles, within a twelvemonth: but the reflection that the convenience to travellers derived from it was owing to a terrible exercise of arbitrary power, and attended with a fearful sacrifice of human life, became the predominant feeling at the sight of it.



Night soon closed in and hid the country from view, but that part of it which we saw on quitting Alexandria was pretty in its way, the banks of the canal being diversified with white villas, gardens, and small cultivated fields of maize, melons, and different kinds of vegetables, with fine sycamore and acacia trees planted along the roads. The night passed slowly and disagreeably owing to the thick wet fog on deck, and the stifling closeness of the cabin below, where, however I could have slept away the hours well enough, had there been room to lie down, but every place, even to the tables was occupied by recumbent passengers, Turks, Italians, Greeks, and non-descripts of all nations, by some of whom it would not have been prudent or agreeable to have bivouacked, and the cabin smelt strongly of tobacco, and odours less refined even than that. We had one distinguished person on board, of no less rank than a Pasha, I think he was called Kheredden Pasha, or something very like it, a stout middle-aged, jovial personage, with a round good humoured countenance, and jet black beard, who fared like any of the other passengers, and spent his time in smoking and playing cards. He wore the insignia of a Pasha, a crescent and star of diamonds on the vest in front, and the dress of a Turkish field officer and admiral, as he belongs to both services, and was present at the battle of Navarino. I understand that he contracts to furnish the Transit administration with butchers' meat, which is not thought derogatory to the high dignity he has attained. A day or two after this arrangement was made, he invited all the officers of the administration to a dinner in Cairo, at which, I am told that the champagne, which is his Highness' pet beverage, flowed without scant. The diamond decoration of the star and

crescent is conferred with the rank, but is only lent so long as the Pasha continues in favour; at his death, or deposition, it reverts to the Sultan, but may be purchased like any other jewel by the family. No ceremony was observed towards him while on board; he ate, drank, talked, and smoked, like all the rest, and his Highness favoured us with his company in an omnibus expedition on the Desert, which he appeared to enjoy as much as any of us. I fancy however that Khereddin Pasha holds a sort of brevet rank, as I understand he has no province to rule over: he is said to be a man of great energy and some talent: he certainly is marvellously inclined to good fellowship, and I think were he in power, could never prove a harsh or tyrannical governor, to judge from his countenance only.

During the whole of the 24th we had a good view of the Delta through which we passed. The features are very tame, and monotonously uniform. The yellow turbid Nile flowing between crumbling banks of brown alluvial soil, which offers nothing but a perfect dead level over which large towns and villages are thickly dispersed, each an assemblage of the most miserable hovels of mud or unburnt brick, with here and there a tenement or two of rather better description, perhaps the residence of the sheyk, or chief man of the village. Many of these places are of considerable size, and all have one or more mosques, the minarets of which are the only buildings that have the smallest pretension to anything like architectural design or skill. Of these towns or large villages, no one but the Arab knows the names, so that could I have remembered them, there was no possibility of learning their different designations: some of them were doubtless on the sites of ancient places of celebrity. Groves of date-palms which here shoot up

to fifty, sixty, and seventy feet, usually surround these places, with here and there a spreading sycamore or acacia. A most oppressive tax of three piastres annually is levied on every date tree, which, when their great number is considered, and the extreme poverty of the inhabitants, must be a cruel impost, but I have great doubts of the correctness of the statement, as a tax of rather more than sixpence on every tree, where these amount to many hundreds, perhaps even thousands, is more than I can well conceive so destitute a population able to pay, being mainly, if not entirely made up of fellahs or cultivators of the soil, a wretched, half clad race, of coarse, ugly features, and squalid to the last degree. Camels, dromedaries, donkeys, and huge buffaloes, with a few dark brown sheep, are their chief possessions; the buffaloes may be seen continually lying in mid river, with their noses alone out of the water, or swimming across to the opposite bank, quiet inoffensive animals, used both for draught and burden. We remarked many persons ploughing with a camel and a buffalo yoked together in most ill assorted fellowship. Dovecotes swarming with myriads of pigeons, rose high above the houses in some of the larger towns, of a conical shape, like immense haystacks, and pierced with innumerable holes for the birds to enter in and come out. Pigeons are a great article of consumption in Egypt, where poultry takes the place of butchers' meat in a great measure. These Egyptian towns have the same light brown colour as the soil; there is nothing to break the uniformity of their aspect, no contrast of colouring; the only arborescent vegetation is the date palm dispersed in groups, or forming groves, but giving no shade, which can only be had under an occasional acacia, sycamore, or nabr, a gigantic

but common species of buckthorn, the small fruit of which is eaten by the Arabs: while the unvarying glare, and sameness of splendour in the sky, must soon fatigue and satiate the eye that has no diversity of scenery or of objects to turn to for relief on the earth beneath. The flats of Holland have more to interest than the Delta of the Nile; for there one sees a population flourishing in plenty and comfort: here, nothing but a people in the lowest condition as regards civilization, poor, and oppressed beyond that of any other country. I was considerably disappointed in the verdure of the Delta, of which one hears so much: the cultivation, such as it is, appears to occupy patches; a great part of the river banks is still untilled, and either bare of vegetation, or producing coarse herbage, the nature of which I could not determine, but it is most monotonous in its character, and we were seldom near enough to the shore to ascertain the kind of crop with certainty. Maize seemed to be one of the most important productions, and I remarked sugar and tobacco occasionally, as also cotton, but many of the crops were only now springing up, the Nile having so lately begun to subside. From the low level of the steamer's deck no extensive view of the Delta can be obtained. Not even from the flat roof of this hotel, which is of very considerable height, nor from the still loftier elevation of the citadel, which offers one of the most magnificent panoramas in the world, can I descry anything of that lake-like appearance the country is said to present at the season of "high Nile." I had fine views of the Delta from the skirts of the desert on the way to Suez two days ago, but at an elevation much too low, and with a sky too hazy to distinguish objects clearly. The effect was that of a Dutch landscape by one of the old



masters, with much of that indistinctness which age gives to an oil painting, of a couple of centuries ago.

We passed the Barrage, where the Nile is prevented by strong embankments from subsiding in the Delta till the irrigation of the land is complete; and our approach to Boulak, the port of Cairo, did not take place till 10, p.m. of the 25th. We landed amidst a confused hubbub of camels, donkeys, and vociferous and quarrelsome Arabs, and found Mr. Sheppard, the proprietor of the English Hotel at which I am staying, ready, with two or three omnibuses, to whirl us away along an excellent road bordered with thriving acacias to his establishment in this magnificent Square, the Usbekeih, about a mile and a half distant from Boulak.

*November 1st.* This place is immeasurably above Alexandria in point of interest, as regards variety, comfort, and beauty; from the flat roof of this hotel I have a splendid view of the city, with its thousand mosques and minarets; and above all, conspicuous in the distance to the S.S.W., yet seemingly close at hand, the mighty pyramids of Ghizeh, appearing like mountains against the pale blue sky; but with my invaluable companion at my side, the telescope, I can distinctly bring all the ranges of stone composing them into view. Below me is a waving sea of foliage, from rows of fine acacias, (*Acacia Lebbek*), sycomores of scripture, (*Ficus Sycomorus*), and other trees, with which the fine esplanade is thickly planted, but there is not an atom of turf, scarcely a blade of grass, or weed of any kind beneath the trees; all is bare ground, as in the desert—a poor, thin, wiry grass is only seen here and there in spots artificially irrigated.

My delight is to mount the roof about sun-set, and watch the departing rays, bringing out the pyramids in

stronger and stronger relief as darkness approaches, till at length they can just be discerned as two dark masses like little mountains on the skirts of the desert. I have witnessed one or two splendid sunsets since my arrival in Egypt, but more frequently they have been dull and vapoury, the sky pale and milky by day, with dim star-light by night.

To day, *November 2nd*, the heavens are quite over-spread with a thin veil of white vapour, with a faint blue sky, streaked and speckled with fleecy clouds, (mackerel sky), here and there. We have had little else but south and south east winds lately, most unfavourable for travellers going up the Nile. Accounts have just been received from the Red Sea of the cholera having committed most dreadful ravages at Jeddah, the port of Mecca, among the pilgrims now assembled there. Cairo is at present quite free from the visitation. All residents with whom I have conversed on the subject, are unanimous in asserting that the season of greatest heat in Cairo, (that is, from July to September inclusive), is the freest of all the four from sickness of every kind, although inducing much personal discomfort; and that the winter is in fact the time looked upon by the inhabitants as the least healthy, on account of the comparative dampness of the air, and the vicissitudes of temperature. Although the cool season has commenced, the heat is still very considerable. I have not seen it under 80° night or morning, and at mid-day in my room I have noted it as high as 83°. As the sun now sets before half-past five, the union of such short days with such long hot nights makes one feel as if one was between the tropics, as the temperature just now is as high and as agreeable as in the West Indies. It was at 90°, I understand, at Alexandria a few days ago. This house is quite



modern, indeed almost new, with very thick stone walls, but from the bad clumsy fitting, and want of finish about the woodwork and painting, which last is never renewed after the first application, you would suppose the building to be a century old. The room I occupy is a large, airy apartment, with whitewashed walls, coarsely coloured in fresco below in a sort of imitation of panel wainscoting of a slate colour, bordered with dark red brown, above which is a sort of fleur-de-lys pattern impressed on the walls in flaming scarlet! The room, which has a south aspect, is nearly a square of about twenty-four feet, and has an alcoved roof, very little, if at all, less in height from the well laid stone floor, and finished in a cornice and oval of unpainted wood, pierced in an open pattern, displaying neither taste nor skill in design. Three very large glazed sash windows nearly fill up the front side, which looks on the Uzbekeih, and immediately below them runs a raised stone dado, covered with luxurious cushions or divans, of blue printed calico, which with window curtains to match, a light iron bedstead with mosquito curtains of thin muslin, &c. &c. complete the furniture of my domicile, which is very comfortable at this season, but I suspect, must prove cold in the winter. Mr. Sheppard is fitting up new premises on a more extensive scale than these, with every convenience for English travellers. The charges are forty piastres per diem, six shillings and eight-pence, if by the week; or fifty piastres, eight shillings and four-pence, for a less time. This includes lodging and board, which last consists of a most substantial breakfast at half-past eight, luncheon, with fruit, at one, dinner, (excellent), at half-past six, with a cup of coffee afterwards; but no tea, unless required, and paid for as an extra.

I find Cairo an extremely amusing place, and from its great size, its novelties are not soon exhausted. The population is variously stated, from eighty thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand, and together with old Cairo and Boulak, which may be called suburbs, the extent of ground it covers is very great. For five piastres, or one shilling, I can get a donkey, (of which animal the choice is inexhaustible), for the whole day, on which, or sometimes on foot, I thread the inextricable labyrinth of crooked streets, lanes and alleys, of which the city is made up, trusting to chance to bring me into some familiar street, or open place from whence I can direct my steps homewards again. No one who has not visited Cairo can form an adequate idea of these strange thoroughfares, from the published views made from drawings by the cleverest artists; because none that I have seen, convey any just notion of the extreme dinginess and dilapidation that everywhere meet the eye. The worst parts of London cannot be compared with the residences of even the respectable class of Cairenes. The houses are solidly built of stone, at least as high as the basement story, which is commonly pierced with low doorways, gates, and iron barred windows, sometimes having quaint carvings or Arabic inscriptions above them, but mostly very dungeon-like in appearance, and opening into receptacles for dust and rubbish, or into square courts, which give light and air to the residents on the next and succeeding stories,—for the basement is seldom or never, I believe, inhabited, unless it may be by the poorer classes. The part of the house above the basement usually projects forward on timber beams, and presents a confused mass of plaster, with windows glazed, or more commonly with a cage-like projection, carved or rather pierced in elaborate

patterns of brown unpainted wood. Some, however, of the principal thoroughfares are more regular, in better repair, and wider, and the city exhibits a variety of architecture that appears absolutely inexhaustible. You come at almost every step to some mosque, arched gate, or passage covered with tracery, or painted in various colours, and with Arabic inscriptions in fresco, or sculptured on the stone, for the most part in miserable taste and execution, but at other times in a style of elegance and finish, that surprises you by the taste and artistic skill displayed, and by the strange contrasts of the decorations on perhaps the same building. Some of the lanes or alleys are so narrow that there is barely room for a single donkey to squeeze himself through, but these are not either common or much frequented: very few of the streets are wider than the narrowest alley in London, and are always thronged with pedestrians, donkeys and their riders, with horses, camels, and occasionally with carriages and carts. I had been led to suppose that much caution and circumspection were required in riding through the streets and lanes of Cairo, to avoid accidents from collision with camels and wheeled carriages, but I find it the easiest and safest thing in the world to pass through the narrowest and most densely crowded thoroughfares, both on foot and on a donkey. In the latter case the animal seems to know how to save you the trouble of guiding him, and threads his way through the crowd with an adroitness that is surprising, even at a full trot or amble, their only serious defect being that they are apt to come down with you sometimes, (an accident which has not yet happened to me), and when it does occur, is in general only a subject for laughter. The pace of the camel is so extremely slow, that though noiseless, there is very

little difficulty in avoiding a string of these animals on meeting them, but there is a possibility of their coming against you unawares from behind, since unless furnished with bells, which is not always the case, their tread is quite inaudible, and you might be swept off your donkey by the enormous loads which project from their sides: but I have not witnessed or heard of such an occurrence. The approach of a carriage is always announced in time to avoid it, by a courier on foot, who cracks a ponderous whip to clear the way. Every one of rank amongst the natives, on driving, or riding out on horseback, is preceded by a running footman, attired with sash or girdle, bringing to mind the act of Elijah girding up his loins, and running before the chariot of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. The donkeys have been called the cabs of Cairo, and truly the comparison holds both as to their number and convenience. These animals literally swarm, as they are used equally by high and low, and you can never be at a loss for one in whatever part of the town you may chance to find yourself, but you will have to contend against a host of donkey boys, each endeavouring with loud vociferations to force his own donkey upon your notice as super-eminent for all valuable asinine qualities above its fellows. Fortunately these creatures are not much given to kicking, otherwise, it might fare ill with the pedestrian whilst making his selection from a dozen or more, all hustling and jostling, head and heels turned towards himself, (the centre of the group), indifferently. Their pace, whether amble, trot, or gallop, is extremely easy, and the saddles are famously padded; the pommel is very high and stuffed like a cushion, which in the event of a tumble must be a great advantage. The donkey boy accompanies you, to urge on the animal



with his stick, and constant cry of “oai, oai,” without which appliances, an Egyptian donkey could no more be incited to active locomotion than his English brethren by those of similar import, from whom I was surprised to find them, after what I had heard of their qualities, capabilities and appearance, differ so little. English donkeys that have been well treated and looked after, I do not think are inferior to those of Egypt in any points of importance. The race here is generally of rather slighter make, the legs longer, and flanks thinner than at home, indicating as we should say, more of blood; they are perhaps also more active, but are not superior in size, and require as much urging to make them go, when not accompanied by their drivers, as ours usually do. Still they are admirable little animals for the service they have to perform, that of winding their way through over crowded streets, where horses could not find a passage in equal numbers, or with equal safety. I saw a donkey the other day with dark stripes across the legs, as if a cross with the Zebra; but as that creature does not inhabit Egypt or Northern Africa, the darker markings may have had some other origin.

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With kindest regards to all our friends,

Believe me,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter IV.)

SHEPPARD'S HOTEL,

USBEKIEH, CAIRO,

*November 7th, 1850.*

My dear E——

HAVING returned from an expedition to the Pyramids yesterday, I hasten to give you a narrative of our proceedings to and from those wonderful structures, and the impression they made on my mind, whilst quite fresh from the visit. Amongst the passengers by the Austrian Lloyds vessel from Trieste, which arrived at Alexandria on the 3rd, was a gentleman with whom I got into conversation at the table d'hote here, and who proved to be an intimate friend and neighbour of Mr. L. V. H——, and whom I recollect having met at W. D. a few years back. He and his son were intending to see the Pyramids if possible before leaving Cairo, and proposed my joining them, an arrangement to which I readily assented, and we agreed to set off the same afternoon, and taking a tent and provisions with us, to bivouack at the Pyramids that night, and rise fresh for their examination at daybreak. Our train consisted of four donkeys for our party of three, and



the dragoman, besides a spare donkey, and their attendant drivers, and a horse for carrying the tent, some spare clothing, thick horse cloths instead of mats, a large chest or box for provisions, knives, forks, glasses, &c.; the provisions consisting of cold chicken, a cold goose, ditto roast shoulder of mutton, bread, cheese, coffee, sugar and eggs, a few bottles of pale ale, one of water, and another of brandy. We mounted our donkeys about half-past four, a great deal too late in the day for a journey of eighteen miles, which is the distance of the Pyramids from Cairo during the time of high Nile, or the season of inundation; but we had been riding about the city, to the citadel, and elsewhere all the morning, and Mr. W — had engagements that detained him till late in the afternoon, leaving us only an hour before sunset, which in this latitude, and in the beginning of November, happens at half-past five o'clock, and the twilight afterwards is not of very long duration. Our route lay through Old Cairo, (which stands on the site of the fortress of Babylon), we then crossed the Nile in a ferry boat to the large and populous village of Geezeh or Ghizeh, (Arabic names are spelt in various ways, and the g is either hard or soft according to the dialect), from whence these Pyramids take their names. The views on the Nile at Old Cairo and Geezeh are very pretty, white houses, on either side of the broad river, being interspersed everywhere with trees, gardens, date groves, and the island of Rhoda, clad in rich cultivation, occupying the centre of the Nile. The way from Old to New Cairo is a fine broad road, planted with trees, and through one continuous garden of olive, fig, mulberry, castor, or prickly pear, &c., beneath which grow all the kinds of esculent vegetables for which Egypt was formerly

renowned, as leeks, onions, garlic, lentils, lettuce, beans, melons, and many others. After leaving Geezeh the daylight began to fail us, but the twilight lasted us still for a few miles farther, and when the new moon set, the Evening star shone with such brilliancy as to supply her place nearly as well. The roads at this season of the inundation ran over the broad embankment between the now inundated fields, which give the country the aspect of a vast inland sea or lake, studded with islands, and intersected with isthmuses and long promontories. The night was beautifully clear, and deliciously cool, and the Pyramids were always in view, seen in deep relief against the sky, but for a long time we never seemed to approach any nearer to them. At length we unexpectedly came to a spot where the weight of the water had forced a passage through the embankment in two places, and made it impossible for our donkeys to proceed further, and we began to fear that we should have to pass the night on this narrow causeway, between two inundated tracts of land; but our dragoman comforted us with the assurance, that by shouting, and shewing our lantern, (which we did by perching the dragoman on the horse's back, and making him a living Pharos), a sailing boat would put off to the breach from the shore beneath the Pyramids, or from a village near at hand, which we could dimly descry. We had, however, to wait about an hour before the boat arrived, during which time the dew fell, and the air began to be chilly; but to this, our half naked Arabs did not appear to be in the least degree sensible. We amused ourselves with getting the provision chest unloaded from the horse, and making a good supper upon the contents, the chest itself serving for table and chairs. When the boat came, we put our tent, clothes,

and the above mentioned chest into it, and proceeded with our dragoman, who was also our cook, (Mohammed by name), over inundated fields, destined to become in a few month's time, dry and verdant with the fruits of the East—but now the habitation of innumerable frogs, and myriads of water fowl,—to the landing place beneath the Pyramids, which we reached about ten o'clock, p.m. The horse, donkeys, and donkey boys, remained under the open canopy of heaven at the broken down embankment till our return, about two, p.m., the next day, with no other covering than the scanty clothing they had on, which is very frequently not even as much as strict decency requires.

The ascent from the usual landing place towards the Pyramids is long and steep. We arrived at a row of tombs, hewn out of the rock, still much below the Pyramids, close in front of which we soon found ourselves, and pitched our tents on the soil composed of debris of sepulchres, pottery, &c., mixed with sand and stones, and were immediately visited by the Shekh of the village, and his posse of chattering Arabs, whose vociferations never ceased for a moment, till the picturesque guard was set for the night, when they subsided into low gossiping tones that continued audible till I fell asleep on my horse cloth, which with a thick pilot cloth great coat and flannel under garments, in addition to the ordinary upper ones of coat, &c., I found insufficient wholly to ward off the cold of the desert air, even under the shelter of a tent, for the wind blew in upon us from under it all night, though not with any great violence. A French traveller and his party were encamped in another tent near us, having the tri-coloured flag displayed.

The next morning we were up a little before sun-rise, (about half-past six), and saw that luminary emerge, and light up a beautiful and singular landscape, the rich inundated valley of the Nile, with the villages rising like islands out of the watery expanse, which teems with incredible numbers of geese and other water birds at this season. From our elevated position, looking northwards, we distinctly saw Cairo with its lofty citadel, and the magnificent mosque of Mohammed Ali crowning all; the Pyramids were behind us, high above our heads, and even their tops concealed by the steep intervening hills of coarse sand and gravel, stones of all sizes, angular blocks of basalt, reddish granite, and soft white limestone rock on which the Pyramids stand, and of which they are mainly composed, pebbles of agate, rounded by attrition, fragments of pottery, (coarse red earthenware), ibis vases, human and other bones, and a strange assemblage of debris, belonging to different epochs and formations, amongst which is one having a volcanic appearance like lava or tufa, and very decomposable, whilst portions of the white limestone which is soft enough to be cut with a knife, are a complete mass of shells. I also picked up near the Pyramids of Cephrenes fragments of a hard rock of a violet or even puce colour, of which I saw no block of any size. As soon as the sun had risen we toiled up to the base of the greater pyramid. To say that it came up to, or fell short of, or exceeded my expectations of its magnitude, would not express the impression I received from its contemplation, and that of the whole group, so unlike did I find the reality to all the representations I have seen of these enormous structures. Their exterior is far more rude and rugged, from time and wilful spoliation than I had any conception of; and I can



compare them, on a close approach, to nothing so much as to the products of some vast stone quarry, shaped into roughly squared blocks, broken and chipped in the process, and piled into a huge pyramid for convenience of transport, or use upon the spot. So great is their magnitude, that at a very moderate distance, say half a mile or less, the dilapidation of the courses of stone becomes almost invisible, and the pyramidal outline stands forth in all the symmetrical regularity which these structures possessed when their casing was entire, and as they appear in drawings and prints of them taken from a distance. They are chiefly built of a greyish or yellowish white limestone, easily cut with a knife, and approaching in texture to indurated chalk of the Freshwater cliffs, not indeed quite so soft, but almost as white, and of different degrees of hardness, often full of shells. I brought away pieces of the great pyramid of Cheops, and specimens of the mortar or cement used to unite them, which is harder than the stone itself. Mr. W——, who seems quite an antiquary, could see nothing in the Pyramids but what was matter for wonder and astonishment, and like the rest of his brethren, professed to find deep skill and science in the architectural details. To myself, they seem very inartificial structures, requiring only a knowledge of the common principles of levelling, and the application of the most ordinary mechanical means, to rear them. With the exception of the vast granite blocks that form the entrance and the walls of the interior chambers, the extreme softness of the limestone offered great facility to the workmen employed on that material for the courses; and as to the raising and placing these blocks *in situ*, I had, long before I saw them, doubted the supposed difficulty of that

process, on which people are so fond of expatiating. In this doubt I am more than ever confirmed, by observing on the spot the great inferiority of these blocks in regard to size, to the exaggerated accounts usually given by travellers of their enormous dimensions, which are in truth, no greater than those of similar blocks in ordinary use for our own solid public works, and vastly smaller than the gigantic masses employed in the Breakwater at Plymouth. It would not be fair to charge the manifest inequality of size as a defect in stones intended to be hidden from view by a solid exterior casing, such as there seems no doubt, once encrusted the Pyramids, and of which a part still remains in good preservation about the summit of the second pyramid, or that of Cephrenes; but this casing would appear to have been after all, but a mere coating of stucco or concrete. The cement has worked out from between most of the blocks, leaving them in a degree disconnected, and numbers of them are displaced wholly or partially, or have fallen to the bottom, and have shivered into those fragments which compose the very soil for a great distance around the base of the Pyramids. No one will contend that there is any beauty whatever in these structures; even when perfect, they could have had none, and yet they must be objects of surpassing interest to any person possessing a spark of imagination.

At first we contented ourselves with such a glance at them as could be got by ascending the steep hill on which that of Cheops and Cephrenes stand; for being on the point of commencing the ascent, the keen morning air reminded us that we had not breakfasted: so in spite of the vociferations of the Arabs who act as guides, and who hovered around us like a swarm of



bees, worrying us at every step with their impertinent importunities, we returned to our tent, where we found our trusty Mohammed busily engaged in preparing a substantial breakfast of omelettes and excellent Mocha coffee, which being dispatched, we returned to the great Pyramid to make the ascent in earnest, having before only stood on the lowermost course or two of stones, and satisfied ourselves of the truth of the assertion, that the vast size of the Pyramids is only apparent when you are in actual contact with them; at the distance of even a few hundred yards they lose half of their really gigantic proportions. Another peculiarity about them, and which I have not seen noticed by any traveller, is, that when you approach within a hundred yards or less of the Pyramid, the fore-shortening of the sloping face of the side you are looking on, has the curious effect to the eye of a perpendicular wall of rough masonry, tapering to a point of course, but all idea of its forming one side of a pyramid is dispelled by this illusive appearance. Excepting from their extremely dilapidated condition, the Pyramids convey no impression of antiquity: for in this climate, no moss or lichen seems capable of existing, and the stones might have been piled up within the memory of a child, for any of those indications of age which the lower tribes of vegetation in damper regions impart to masonry through lapse of time; the colour of the stone is as light and fresh as if just quarried.

I had no idea that the Pyramids stood on so elevated a site; I do not know the elevation, but you look down from the table land at their base into the plain of the Nile below, as if from the summit of a very high cliff; indeed, their situation was one of the points on which my pre-conceived notions were completely at variance

with the fact, nor have I ever seen any drawings that give a just idea of the position of the Pyramids and the scenery around them. The deeply undulating surface exhibits a scene of utter desolation, not a blade of grass springs upon, nor does the faintest tint of green enliven the pale brownish white waste, composed of debris and coarse sandy gravel, mixed with fragments of pottery, and human bones thrown out from the tombs. The ascent and descent of the great Pyramid has often been described as an arduous undertaking; it is certainly somewhat tiring, but I found both going up and coming down, very far easier than I expected, and excepting perhaps for ladies, it is no achievement at all. With by no means a strong head for climbing dizzy heights, I found I could look down from any part of the ascent without the least feeling whatever of giddiness, and should infinitely have preferred being allowed to scale the Pyramids unattended, and to have taken my own time in the ascent; but that, the officious importunate Arabs would never allow strangers to do, as they would thereby lose a chance of getting *Bakscheesh* from him, were he simple enough to comply with their demands, which are almost incessant from the moment he arrives, to the instant he leaves the Pyramids. To a person in good health, the chief, if not the only source of fatigue in ascending, consists in the rapidity with which he scrambles to the summit, urged on by the Arabs, who will not allow him a moment's rest, but continue pulling and pushing him up the successive courses of stones; when if he were allowed quietly and deliberately to select his own footing, he might reach the summit nearly as fresh as when he began to mount. The ascent is generally made at the north east angle, and the blocks are mostly so broken and disjointed, that

in the space of a few yards of every course, there is seldom wanting a place for the feet to enable the climber to get on to the course next above him, without being obliged to raise himself up the whole height of the block, and wear out his knees in planting them on the top of the range: but the Arabs insist on taking you up partly by this exertion on your own side, partly by the pulling and pushing process on theirs, under the idea that your vanity will be gratified by arriving at the platform before any other of your companions. A considerable portion of the angle is broken away about two-thirds from the top, and here travellers generally halt for a few minutes to take breath, if the guides will let them, before completing the ascent. The descent, often pictured as quite formidable compared with the ascent, I found mere child's play, and arrived at the entrance of the pyramid some minutes before my two companions, by jumping off each course to the one beneath, where a broken part did not present a convenient step for the foot. The day was, as every day has been, uninterrupted sunshine; the cool season had just set in, and has since continued, after a summer of unprecedented heat and duration, up to the present date, (*November 8th*); a fine north breeze blew freshly the whole day, and my two companions allowed that they felt no fatigue or oppression in several hours rambling on the arid shadeless soil, in the full blaze of the sun, so temperate were his rays.

The view from the top of the great pyramid, lighted up by a bright sun, which is rarely obscured for a moment, is glorious. From north to south, and at our feet, stretched the broad green valley of the Nile, its surface like a sea with promontories and isthmuses, shooting into and across it, with villages, palm groves, and

exuberant tracts of cultivation rising from the bright placid surface which is alive with countless multitudes of wild fowl, geese, cranes, ibises, pelicans, &c. over which numerous birds of prey, falcons, kites, and vultures, with which Egypt pre-eminently abounds, are constantly soaring. Beyond the limits of the inundation, and on either side of the river stretched the great Lybian desert, its unbounded and unvaried surface of brownish white sand raised by the wind into long ridges, or broken into shorter undulations, and the whole resembling a vast ocean in every thing but colour, agitated and swelling into billows. I ought however to add, that ranges of hills of white limestone, the same as that of which the Pyramids are built, are visible on the north and south, being part of a chain terminating in the Red Sea at Suez, and of which the Mokattan hills also behind Cairo are a portion. These hills seem to run parallel with the Nile and its principal branches on the side of the desert, and were possibly at one period its boundaries. We remained on the top for perhaps an hour or more, during all which time our guides would hardly allow us a moment's peace, through the reiterated clamour for *Baksheesh*, and to have the word given for descending from this, and mounting to the top of the adjoining pyramid of Cephrenes in five minutes, which one of them actually accomplished in four minutes and a half, in our sight. The distance between the two Pyramids, which are of nearly equal height, appears to be about two hundred yards, and the angles of each are exactly opposite one another. Two of our most active Arabs, on promise of a few piastres as *Baksheesh*, started for the race, running down the angle of the vast incline like cats, and quickly disappeared from view, till on gaining the base, they



were again seen coursing over the rough stony ground, during which run, one of them divested himself of every fragment of his scanty clothing, and in a few moments of time was scaling the second pyramid, and was reduced by distance to so pigmy a size that I repeatedly lost sight of him if I took my eyes off him for a moment, and I always had much difficulty to find him again, although he never could for an instant be hidden by any intervening object. The apex of the pyramid is covered with the remains of the original casing, yet over this comparatively smooth surface the man contrived to clamber with the facility of a cat, and a moment after was seen waving his arms on the summit. He then descended the second Pyramid, and re-ascended the first, and as rapidly joined us again on the platform. The extreme softness of the stone offers great facility to those aspirants to such fame as can be secured through after ages by the simple agency of an inscription, and I am ashamed to say that I yielded to the national propensity, and found time to carve in large and deep letters the initials W.A.B. on the face of one of the altar-like blocks that occupy the centre of the platform, but could not add the date before our party proposed descending to view the interior.

The entrance may be perhaps at one third of the total height of the pyramid from the ground, and the descent into the passage leading to the great chamber, and the subsequent ascent to the latter, is the only arduous part of the undertaking, and it may justly be termed so; as for ladies, it is really a serious affair, and rather an awkward one for any person. The descent to the mouth of the passage is itself exceedingly steep and slippery, being composed of huge granite blocks inclining inwards and downwards at a pitch as sharp as

the roof of any house, and nothing to hold on by. The first part of the passage is extremely low and narrow, but it widens and increases greatly in height, becoming at the same time, so excessively steep, that the combined support of the guides is required to prevent your sliding back, an event which would prove fatal, as the length of the incline is so great that a light at either end appears to be a star, as in the gallery of a mine, and at the lower extremity of this inclined passage is a sudden perpendicular fall of at least six feet, I should say, seven or eight, with very rugged sides, which I found a nervous business to surmount on returning, as the guides could hardly find footing for themselves whilst having to support each person of our party, and literally to lift him down. In one part of the incline you have to walk along a narrow ledge for several yards, not above a foot wide from the perpendicular face of the wall, and having a deep, rugged, and very slanting way below you on the right hand. On this ledge the Arabs enable you to walk by holding you by the arms, but I could not altogether overcome the feeling of insecurity, as there is not any projection whatever to lay hold of, and the stone you tread on is quite smooth, which with the precipitous character of the ascent, gives the appearance of some danger to the undertaking. I would strongly advise no nervous lady, and perhaps I might add, no nervous man, to attempt visiting the interior of the great pyramid, for after all, there is very little to be seen, and that little can be conveyed by description nearly as well as by a personal view. The lights furnished by our Arab guides were utterly insufficient to show us the size, proportions, and colours of the chamber in which the sarcophagus stands. We could only see by shifting our position, portions of



the walls, and a dim discovery of the roof by holding up the candles: all else was one deep black vacuity of darkness; with a stagnant suffocating atmosphere, never under 80°, and never renewed by ventilation: the only changes of air coming in and going out by the same long confined passage, which is the sole entrance to this sepulchral chamber. We found no bats in it, at least if there were any, they did not show that they were at all disturbed by our entrance, and we noticed nothing of their remains, at which I was surprised, having heard that they abounded so much in the interior of the great Pyramid; but we found them in swarms in the adjoining sepulchral grottos hewn in the rock that forms the area around the second Pyramid. We saw so little of the first or lowest chamber, and found the dust and closeness so disagreeable and oppressive, and the incessant importunities of the Arabs for *Baksheesh*, at this stage of their conductorship, so intolerable, that we agreed not to visit the second or upper chamber, as not likely to repay the toil of the ascent. Whilst looking, or rather, groping about in the chamber, I inadvertently stepped into an opening leading downwards from the floor to some passage below, and had not an Arab guide been most providentially close at my elbow, (no doubt teasing me at the moment for *Baksheesh*), who caught me by the arm, and just saved me in time, my fall would have been a most serious, if not fatal one. The light held over the spot disclosed a very awkward looking cavity, sloping down at an abrupt angle, which the pitchy darkness prevented me entirely from seeing. I gave the old Arab a special token of my gratitude for his timely succour in the hour of danger; but from the moment of the accident, till we quitted the pyramid, he showed constant fear that his services would be

unrequited, (as by an Arab, they certainly would have been), and continued to remind me of the aid he had rendered, till I was sick of hearing about it. We made it a rule to reserve all payments and gratuities for our return to the tent, and to the very last moment before striking it, and to shew not even a *para* to the guides, as their importunities for *Baksheesh* would have been redoubled at the sight of the smallest coin. As regards robbery by open violence, or even intimidation, there is not the slightest danger in visiting the Pyramids *now*, whatever risk there might have been formerly; the shewing these structures being at the present day carried on in a perfectly systematic manner, the right being a vested one of doing so, and the Shekh, or chief of the village, being answerable to government for the security of visitors; but pilfering may happen, and should be guarded against, by keeping watch on the pockets, and by having a trustworthy dragoman always about the personal baggage, &c. On leaving the great Pyramids of Cheops, we proceeded to view (the exteriors only), those of Cephrenes, Belzoni, and the fourth and far smaller one of Colonel Vyse, a description of which is of course unnecessary. This examination occupied us several hours, and we did not start for Cairo till 2 p.m. The day was heavenly, and though the sun shone out unclouded, not one of us felt his rays, to which we were fully exposed, in the least degree oppressive, even after all our climbing, and disturbed rest the night before.

The Pyramid of Cephrenes stands in the centre of a vast square or court, two sides of which are nearly perfect and form a series of tombs hewn in the solid rock with many curious inscriptions in hieroglyphics, besides bas-reliefs, some of which are in excellent preservation, and the figures of a few, representing

oxen and other animals, extremely well designed. The two other sides of the square are distinctly traceable, but much encumbered by mounds of rubbish, and consist of arched tombs and sepulchres of solid masonry, here and there in very good preservation; but the pyramid they surround is in as dilapidated a state as that of Cheops, excepting the small portion of casing which remains at the top tolerably entire. The third pyramid, that called after Belzoni, is of very inferior size, but at the base it is partly cased with red granite in excellent preservation, and around it lie many granite blocks, together with fragments of columns, and sculptured stones, which must have been the remains of some building of wholly different architecture. The interior of this Pyramid has been opened up and examined by Belzoni. The fourth Pyramid is of very much smaller dimensions, and is surrounded by, or at least stands in a court or enclosure of tombs like that of Cephrenes, and its interior, Dr. Abbott tells me, is very interesting in an antiquarian point of view. All around the Pyramids are deep mummy pits, and about mid-way between the Pyramid of Cephrenes and the Sphinx, we saw lying on the sand two lids of sarcophagi sculptured as mummies, one of which was in the most beautiful preservation imaginable, and covered with hieroglyphics: they were both of blue or dove coloured marble, the second somewhat injured. We also saw a very large tomb which had been excavated from the drift sand and rubbish by Colonel Vyse, but we could not gain access to it.

The Sphinx I found with the features much more mutilated than is generally represented in public accounts; indeed, very few lineaments of the human face remain, and viewed from behind, the head has a

grotesque, almost ludicrous aspect, like an immense bob wig: but the front view of this wonderful structure is very striking: it is wonderful only however from its colossal size, for the stone is the same with that composing the Pyramids, and extremely soft. I searched carefully for some small memorial of antiquity, a scarabæus, or mummy of glass or earthenware, but could pick up nothing, although the Arabs have innumerable relics of the kind for sale at very low prices, which Dr. Abbott says are really genuine in most cases, and not, as asserted, manufactured in England on speculation.

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Believe me, always,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter V.)

CAIRO,  
*November 11th, 1850.*

My dear E——

I am afraid there will be but little chance of any letter reaching you from me for perhaps four months to come; I have arranged to form one of a party of three

to go up the Nile at the end of this week; we propose to pass up at least as high as the second cataract, and should we find it practicable, to ascend the river still higher in Nubia. We calculate on being absent from Cairo three or four months.

My companions are Lieutenant Pengelly, and a young naval friend of his, Mr. Lakes, both on leave of absence for health. We have bargained for an excellent boat, with the owner, an Englishman of the name of Page, who has consented to let us have it at £ 22 per month. We take a crew of eight Arabs, including the cook, and the Reis or captain, a trusty man in Page's employ, who has been up the river at least a dozen times. Our expenses during the voyage, hire of boat, and living included, will be about £ 10 or £ 12 per month, each, which is cheaper than we can live for at this hotel, where the charges are about £ 15 per month, exclusive of out door expenses. Our boat has just been newly painted and repaired, and made perfectly clean, which might not have been done by an Arab or Egyptian owner; the three cabins are very nicely fitted up with soft divans, glazed windows and Venetian blinds, and there is a small apartment in the stern. We rode down on Saturday to Boulak to inspect it, and were much pleased with its appearance. I expect to be close upon, and most likely within, the tropics before the shortest day, and so escape the cold of Cairo, which every one agrees in saying, is severely felt at mid-winter from the ill construction of the houses, the want of fire places, and the comparatively humid atmosphere. At present the climate is glorious, the cool season has regularly succeeded the unusually protracted heat, and the thermometer is now in my apartment at, or a little under, 70° at 8 a.m., or ten



degrees less than it was a week ago, whilst the mornings and evenings are too cool to be quite pleasant. I find additional bedclothes necessary, and many of the natives have put on their winter garments. Still, the weather is quite warm through the day, fogs and mists arising about sunset, which chill the air, and dispose to colds and coughs. Barring a slight cold in the head, picked up I suppose in the tent at the Pyramids, I am remarkably well, and enjoy the delightful warmth and perpetual sunshine amazingly.

I have made several very agreeable acquaintances in this city; Mr. Leider, of the Church Missionary Society, Mr. Trail, late of the Rhodes Gardens, who is very kind and attentive; Dr. Abbott, a zealous Egyptian antiquary, by whom I was invited to come and dine à la Turc, but which mode of eating a dinner, I never wish to repeat. Mr. Trail introduced me to the reading room of the Egyptian Society, where there is a valuable collection of books relating to Egypt, which I can go and consult at any time. Cairo itself is an endless source of amusement, and I have not yet seen a hundredth part of its interminable lanes, courts, alleys, and picturesque buildings. I have been in three mosques, where ten or fifteen years ago, a christian could hardly have found access without a special firman, and might then have been insulted when he entered; now, things are so altered, that they do not in all the mosques even insist on the infidels taking off their shoes at the entrance, although that is rigorously kept up as respects moslems, in the more especially tidy ones. In most mosques large loose slippers are kept for visitors to put on over their shoes. Two days ago, we went to see the dancing dervishes practise their ludicrous religious ceremonies in their mosques, which they do

every Friday. Each moslem who entered scrupulously left his shoes at the door, whilst we, giaours, who formed a large party, were permitted to desecrate the holy pavement with our boots and shoes, and stranger still, two or three unveiled English ladies went with us, and were quietly permitted to take their places with the gentlemen, while not a single native woman was on the floor of the mosque, but they might be seen in numbers peering through the bars of the small windows in the dome upon the devotees and heretics assembled there.

*Cairo, November 15th.* We are fast getting every thing ready on board the boat that is to be our floating home for the next three months, and expect to commence our voyage on Wednesday the 20th. We trust to escape the disagreeable, though not intense cold of a Cairene winter. I find sudden changes of temperature here in the mornings and evenings, from 80° to 60°, or lower in the open air, and two days back with a smart shower, succeeded by drizzling mist. Although the Nile water has ceased to disagree with me, I cannot join in the encomiums bestowed on it, as being the most delicious water in the world, for independently of its thickness, it has to me, even when filtered, a sensible taste, which the Alexandrian had not, and which is not improved, either in reality or ideally by transportation in the unsavoury looking skin, (that of the entire animal, the head excepted), in which it is carried to the consumer's premises. Such bottles are usually said to be goat skins, but from the great size of many, I suspect they are as often those of donkeys, if not of other animals, very disgusting looking vehicles for one's daily drink, but use has already reconciled me to the thought that every drop of water I swallow has been in contact

with these primitive casks, Cairo is an exceedingly entertaining place, and the absolute certainty of scarcely a day's interruption to the bright sunny weather greatly enhances the enjoyment of perambulating it. The 11th ultimo was the first day that was completely overcast, like a November day at home; the rest were bright and clear, as usual.

If you have not read Lane's "Modern Egyptians," pray do, it is an admirably minute and correct picture of the Cairenes, so esteemed at least by every one here. Will you set Wacey to work to procure for me a most admirable lithograph\* of the great Pyramid of Cheops, it is so exact a likeness of that structure, that I shall be very glad to have it to hang up for a remembrance.

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Believe me,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter VI.)

ON BOARD THE NILE BOAT, MARY VICTORIA,

On the river, 20 or 30 miles South of Cairo,

*Tuesday, November 26th, 1850.*

My dear E——

I am now fairly afloat with Lieutenant Pengelly and Mr. Lakes in our aquatic habitation, and probable

\* The great Pyramid from the North East taken by the Camera Lucida, and done on stone by Edward Lane, 1830, folio, lithograph, coloured, published by J. Dickenson, 114, New Bond Street.

domicile for three or perhaps four months to come. We feel already quite at home, and exceedingly comfortable in the *Mary Victoria*, and hitherto have had very little experience of the usual annoyances which travellers on the Nile complain of. To our great joy we have escaped the insect disturbers of rest, though we have received terrific accounts of their numbers and prowess on the Nile, and the only intruders on our domestic peace, are a small family of rats, and a colony of cockroaches, both confining themselves to the lockers and timbers of the boat, and never appearing, at least by day, in any part of the vessel where their presence would be a source of personal annoyance, and our well arranged mosquito curtains would effectually exclude these, and every other nocturnal visitor from the beds. We found in Mr. Page, the owner of the boat, a very fair dealing and honourable man, who has spared no pains to render our voyage comfortable as far as the *appointments* of the *Mary Victoria* are concerned, and we consider ourselves as very fortunate in not having had to deal with an Arab owner, with whom a contract drawn up in very express terms in Arabic, and signed at the Consulate, would have been absolutely necessary; a proceeding both troublesome and attended with some expense, and one which rarely effects the purpose in view, of obviating any dispute or misunderstanding between the contracting parties, as the Arab boat proprietors seldom stand by the written engagement, but are ever ready to seize an opportunity of evading the conditions to which they have subscribed, and to take every advantage in their power of the ignorance and inexperience of tourists. We have a very young crew of *eight* men, (including the Reis or captain, and the steersman), docile, good humoured



fellows from Nubia or Ethiopia, with mild, honest countenances, who seem as happy as kings, and amuse us with their simple boat song, or rather chant, and performances on the small drum of the country, and on the tambourine. We have each of us a servant, having dispensed altogether with our dragoman, who is almost invariably a dishonest, or at least imposing fellow, very consequential, and unmanageable, and who requires many times the amount of wages given to a single Arab domestic. Saad, my own man, acts as cook on board, and serves us in that capacity very creditably; his wages are 200 piastres or about £2 per month for his double official duties, finding himself in food, and every thing besides during the voyage. These, with our three selves compose a little community of fourteen, Lieutenant P. assuming the supreme command of the crew and vessel, subject to the advice and opinion of the Reis on matters relating to local navigation; the latter, notwithstanding his extreme youth, conducting himself towards his people with wonderful dignity of deportment, never mixing in their games or songs, but generally sitting retired at the head of the boat, watching her progress, and ready to give his orders when necessary.

Mr. Lakes not being well enough to accompany Mr. Pengelly and myself to the Barrage—a vast undertaking of the late Mohammed Ali, for damming up the waters of the Nile when at their height, and retaining them on the irrigated lands of the Delta longer than the time of their natural subsidence would allow of,—that gentleman and myself left Cairo in the boat on the 21st for the junction of the Rosetta and Damietta branches of the Nile where the above works are situated. We caught sight of them before sunset, but could not examine them till the next day: they are



on a scale of great magnitude, but their ultimate completion, from the enormous expenses already incurred, and the sum which will be required to finish the undertaking, is considered very doubtful, particularly when the careless, unenterprising character of Abbas Pasha is taken into account, as another impediment to carrying out his predecessor's grand conception. The Barrage is as its name imports, a vast dam of masonry, stretching across the two principal branches of the Nile, (those of Rosetta and Damietta), just at their point of junction with, or confluence into the main stream which forms the apex of the Delta. It is in fact an immense bridge of numerous slightly pointed arches, and with towers at its extremities, the arches are to be closed with flood gates to admit the Nile freely during the period of its rise, but, as I understand it, are to be partially closed when the inundation is at its height, and the river begins to fall; when the water in that part of the valley of the Nile above the Barrage will be longer retained on the irrigated lands, the fertility of which it is supposed will thereby be much augmented. But it is doubted by many competent judges, whether any barrier, however solidly constructed, can resist the enormous pressure to which it must inevitably be subjected, especially during the period of the high Nile or inundation. It is feared that no sufficiently good foundation can be made in the bed of soft alluvium, even should the superstructure itself prove firm enough to stem the current, and the weight of accumulated water when the sluices are closed. The works are not yet half completed, but are slowly going on by forced and ill paid labour, as in all other Government undertakings of the kind in this country. Having inspected the Barrage, we set off on our return to Cairo, and

passing the port of Boulak, we took up our position under the beautiful island of Rhoda, with its fine, but now half ruined gardens, over which I was not long since conducted, by the late curator, Mr. James Trail. Rhoda is reputed to be the spot where the daughter of Pharoah went to wash herself at the river when she discovered the infant Moses; the island lies partly opposite to Old Cairo, and consequently nearly on the site of ancient Memphis, and has the Nilo-meter on its smaller extremity. The tradition carries plausibility with it, since Rhoda was, probably, from time immemorial a garden residence, and from its retired situation well suited for the ablutions of a king's daughter.

Mr. L. joined us on the 23rd, and the next day, we were fairly on our long voyage up the "river of Egypt," which has hitherto proved most prosperous and agreeable. My two companions are perfect gentlemen, quiet, and yet very cheerful, disposed to make the best of every thing, and anticipating great enjoyment for the future. We all feel as much at home in our little floating castle, as if we were ashore, or in Old England; the winds have hitherto been propitious, enabling us to make sail during the night, and to steal softly into ever increasing warmth, at least by day; for the mornings, evenings, and nights, are very cold: but the glorious sun is never obscured except for a brief interval, perhaps once in a week, by some fleeting cloud, shining else unceasingly over our watery path. Within, we are amply protected from the cold of the night, by good bedding, clothing, and folding doors, and when the mosquitoe curtains, whose nominal office is now quite a sinecure, are arranged by our trusty squires, Saad, Mohammed, and Ameen, for the night, each sleeping place is as private and retired as if we slept in separate

apartments. I have the utmost cause for self gratulation in having brought out a gun with me: it has proved an admirable adjunct to our trip, not merely from the amusement derived from shooting, but as a means of replenishing our larder, daily, with every variety of excellent fowl; while our stock of poultry on board is reserved against the failure of *game*, and we are not, as we should otherwise be, condemned to that kind of food almost exclusively. It is only occasionally, on arriving at the towns or larger villages, that we can hope for the luxury of butchers' meat, mutton, kid, or as a great rarity, beef, all of inferior quality to what we are accustomed to at home. Without our guns, we never set foot on shore, and invariably return from our walks through the palm groves and fertile fields of Egypt, with the materials for our morrow's breakfast and dinner. The spoils of the chase have hitherto been confined to wild pigeons, wild geese, ducks, and larks, which last are as common as in England, and exactly identical in species with our skylark, which we should hold it a sin to shoot at home; but here, we find it expedient to cast away all such scruples in providing for our daily mess. The crew are delighted with our foraging, as we are enabled to supply the second table as well as our own with game, which is a welcome addition to their simple and frugal diet of bread, lentel soup, (the red pottage of Esau), or certain messes of vegetables, leeks, onions, cabbage, with rice, or corn of various kinds; the Nile water being their only beverage. We invariably land at the Egyptian villages, many of which are large and populous, to shoot doves and pigeons; the former abound in the extensive palm (date) groves, in the vicinity of the cultivated lands, and they commit great depredation on the maize and guinea corn:

the latter are domesticated in huge pigeon houses, of which I have before spoken. I am sorry to say our travelling countrymen do not always observe the rights of property, but make a practice of shooting pigeons, heedless of the remonstrances of the pacific inhabitants, who are afraid of making more energetic demonstrations of disapprobation. We never molest the pigeons in the villages, but to shoot any stray birds outside, however near to the houses, is considered perfectly fair, and is never objected to by the people, who invariably behave to us with civility, as we stroll amongst their huts of mud or unburnt brick. The children it is true, sometimes run away at the sight of us *giaours*, and the dread of the evil eye is occasionally manifested by an expression of impatience from the women, if we indulge in a stare of curiosity or speculation at them or their occupations, but the dread and dislike of the Frank is fast wearing away, not in Cairo only, but all along the river; and the probability is, that before many years shall have elapsed, the British voyagers on the Nile will be regarded by the dwellers along its banks, as their best, and certainly their most profitable friends.

It is said that the ultimate occupation of Egypt by the English is looked forward to with considerable confidence by the Cairenes, and that they express much satisfaction at the prospect. It is certain we shall never relinquish the hold we have on their country without a struggle, and that we can never permit any of the great European powers, France, Russia, or Austria, to gain a footing in Egypt, as the safety of our Indian empire would be fearfully compromised by foreign occupation of this country, if it did not eventuate in its loss.



*Minieh, lat. 28. 7., December 2nd.* A week's sailing with light airs and calms, and an occasionally favourable breeze, has brought us thus far on our voyage, nearly half way to the great centre of attraction, Thebes; a degree of progress we owe to the unwearied exertions of our willing and light hearted crew of Nubians, in tracking during the day; for at night we generally now make fast to the banks till daybreak, unless the wind should be propitious, when we keep under sail all night, or a part of it.

*December 5th.* Left Minieh this forenoon with a favourable breeze from the northwards, having been detained much longer than we intended by an accident to Mr. Lakes, who, when shooting very early on Tuesday morning with a Maltese gentleman, received a shot from the latter intended for a snipe, 27 corns entering in various parts of his person, and one striking the left eye, and wounding the white, a very short distance only from the transparent cornea, which happily escaped an injury that must have infallibly destroyed the sight of that eye. The pain at the moment, Mr. Lakes describes as so intense, that he imagined the shot had pierced his brain, and he fell involuntarily on receiving it. On recovering, he found that he could not see at all with the wounded eye: he managed to reach the boat, a distance of several miles from the spot where the accident occurred, partly on foot, partly on a donkey, and presented himself before us whilst we were at breakfast, informing us, with a smile on his countenance, of what had happened, and exhibiting to Mr. Pengelly and myself, an alarming appearance, his face being perforated with several shot, and the left eye closed. Fortunately Minieh is the residence of a European district surgeon, who being a friend of the Maltese,



whose mal-adroitness caused this distressing event, was immediately in our boat, and on examination, found the eye wounded as above related. He prescribed a lotion of acetate of lead, constantly applied, and then a poultice of linseed, intending to bleed his patient, should inflammatory symptoms shew themselves: but most fortunately, the previously lowered system of Mr. Lakes was little disposed to take such inflammatory action, and contrary to all expectation, he passed the night free from any pain worth speaking of, and has ever since been going on as well as could be wished. The sight of the eye is much obscured, but it is to be hoped that in a few days, the troubled humours in the ball will be absorbed, and replaced by others of the usual transparency, there being no reason to apprehend the smallest injury to the optic nerve. Mr. Lakes is sufficiently well to allow us to pursue our voyage, his eyes are of course bandaged, and he cannot employ himself for some days to come, but we have the greatest reason to be thankful that things were no worse. Mr. Lakes might have suffered the loss of his eye, and we must have returned in the boat with him to Cairo.

We are now, thank God, again stemming the broad bosom of old Nile, to the wild music of our Arab, or rather, Berber crew, (the Berbers are a tribe of central Nubia), under a glorious, never ceasing sunshine, now so mild in its refulgence, that you would suppose yourself in England, were it not for the plague of flies, countless hosts of which have invaded our watery domicile since we moored our little bark alongside the town of Minieh; the plague of fleas has also commenced, and begins to be troublesome to us at night. The banks of the river swarm with gigantic rats, which never fail to come on board whenever we stop, but they

seem to content themselves with running about the boat during the night, and gnawing the timbers, as we have not yet discovered that we are sufferers by their visits to our store lockers, or poultry crate, which is a matter of astonishment, considering the facility of access they have to any article of food on board, and their numerical force and rapacity. We have two cats, (as yet only kittens), and a rat trap on board, but cannot entirely succeed in expelling our unwelcome visitors.

\* \* \* \*

With kind regards to all our friends at Ryde, and elsewhere,

Believe me, always,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter VII.)

ON BOARD THE MARY VICTORIA, NILE BOAT,  
Between Minieh and Manfalout, Central Egypt;

*December 6th, 1850.*

My dear E——

A charming breeze is wafting us merrily up the Nile, and the plague of flies has ceased for the present, as by dint of brushing them out of the cabin with fly-flaps and towels, we have succeeded in reducing their

numbers within the limits of moderation, and so long as we continue in mid-channel, we may reckon safely on enjoying freedom from one of the most serious annoyances to which travellers in Egypt are exposed. The nights are now always chilly, and the early mornings, till about nine o'clock, or even later, quite cold. Even in this quarter of the world, the tendency to extremes, evinced by the climates of the Eastern side of all large tracts of land, is manifested; for Mr. Headland, the superintendent of the sugar factory at Rhodah, told me this morning, that the canes are occasionally much injured by frost in this latitude,  $28^{\circ}$ , and that in January sharp hoar frosts are not unfrequent, ice having been formed last winter there one fourth of an inch in thickness.

Minieh is one of the largest provincial towns of Central Egypt, and has a garrison of 800 troops, the depot of four regiments of cavalry. Like all other towns in this country, it is a confused assemblage of narrow streets and alleys, made up of dirt and rubbish, and dilapidation; the abodes of the lower classes mere mud hovels, and those of the higher, pigsties on a larger scale. We had letters to M. Mounier, who has the management of a very extensive sugar manufactory close to the town, belonging to the eldest son of Abbas Pasha, a boy of twelve years of age. M. Mounier received us with great politeness, and conducted us over the works, which are very complete, where the sugar undergoes every process, from its extraction from the cane, to its refinement as loaf sugar. The evaporation of the cane juice is carried on in vacuo, as in the great English refineries, and the purification is effected by animal charcoal, obtained from immense heaps of bones, calcined on the spot in proper furnaces. The machinery

is of the most complete description, and consists not only of the sugar mills, &c., required for refining, but of powerful English steam engines for driving them, and pumps of great calibre for irrigating the land, of which 1500 acres are planted with canes. The labour in this, and another sugar manufactory at Rhodah, a few miles further up, is forced; and the poor workmen, to whom no day of rest is allowed, (not even Friday, the Moslem sabbath), are paid their scanty earnings in kind, never in money, and this payment consists of molasses or the refuse sugar, the delivery of which is often withheld from them for weeks, whilst they are driven to the work chained together like convicted felons. The accounts we hear from persons of the highest respectability of the oppressive exactions and barbarities of the Egyptian government, and of the venality, falsehood, and dishonesty of every official in its employ, would appear incredible, did not every thing we see around us bear witness to their truth. The fearful picture of the desolation of Egypt drawn by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. 29 to 31, is a vivid representation of what she is at the present moment, and a signal instance of the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy. Between Minieh and Manfalout we stopped to deliver letters and newspapers to Mr. Headland, at Rhodah, (which word signifies in Arabic a garden), the property of Ismael Bey. We saw there a steam pump, &c., for irrigation, and others in course of erection; the works are extensive, but the sugar is sent from the manufactory to Cairo to be refined, by a large English firm in that city. The appearance of tall factory chimneys vomiting out smoke, and huge boilers emitting clouds of steam, not to mention an occasional steam-boat puffing and splashing against the turbid stream, that has its sources in the

heart of a barbarous and unknown land, divests, it must be owned, the valley of the Nile of some of that romance which early associations have attached to it, and perhaps speaks in significant language of its restoration at no very distant day to more than its ancient glory and prosperity. Mr. H. received us with great civility, and would have shewn us the works, had we not declined his offer on the plea that we were anxious to profit by the then favourable wind for continuing our voyage upwards; besides which, we had no desire to see a second sugar manufactory, similar to, but less complete, than that which we had so lately visited, and with the details of which we were so well acquainted. We contented ourselves therefore, (I mean Mr. Pengelly and myself, for Mr. Lakes could not of course accompany us), with walking over the gardens of the governor of the district, in which Mr. Headland keeps a fine young lion, just five months old, and already nearly as large as a mastiff, lately brought from Nubia, and intended, I believe, as a present for Abbas Pasha. The beast is allowed to roam at large over the garden, and although now only exhibiting the amiable traits of leonine juvenility, he gives evidence in his rough play, of great strength, and when feeding, of some ferocity; tokens, it will be well to attend to in time, as in a few more months, the unrestrained liberty he now enjoys, may be perverted to the harm of those about him.

*Manfalout, December 7th.* We arrived at this place, the ancient Crocodilopolis, about noon, and have now completed the half of our voyage between Cairo and Thebes. The wind has been exceedingly variable, and often, none at all, which has obliged us to get on by polling and tracking; but on the whole, we have made thus far a fair average passage for the time of year, for



the month of December is always considered unfavourable for ascending the river, from the unsteadiness and uncertainty of the wind, which as often blows from the south as from the north, and calms, or very light airs are constantly intervening. We went ashore at every large town or village on our way. Manfalout is a small place compared with Minieh, and like every other Egyptian town, is principally built of unburnt brick. There are two handsome minarets belonging to the principal mosques, which last, with the residence of the governor or other principal officer of the district, are the only buildings at all distinguishable in the cities of this country, from the mass of dirty, dilapidated, or half finished habitations which compose them.

A pretty little Egyptian boy, about ten or eleven years of age, volunteered to conduct us where doves were to be found, on which gentle bipeds, I am ashamed to say, we have been satiating our carnivorous appetites for this fortnight past, for which I can only plead by way of excuse, their delicate flavour, so superior to that of domestic poultry, and the means their death affords us of economising, or rendering the purchase of the latter almost unnecessary. The little fellow failed to find us many birds, but gambolled and frolicked along with us outside the town, perfectly at his ease with the *giaours*, and at last bade us adieu at the door of his mother's house. Mr. Pengelly took such a fancy to him, that he fain would have taken him away with us up the river, an arrangement we should all have been equally charmed with, and to which the boy shewed no sort of repugnance; but his mother told us when we made the proposition, that she could not bear to part with him, although she had four other children at home, of which he was the eldest, and she appeared to enter-

tain no distrust of our intentions. At parting, Mr. Pengelly gave him a small silver coin, value a quarter piastre, or about a halfpenny sterling, no despicable *baksheesh* to a child in this poverty stricken country. The poor little fellow looked at it, and seemed for a moment as if hesitating to accept it, then deposited it, on our encouraging him to do so, in a fold of his vesture, with an air of shame at becoming the recipient, which astonished us in a country where avarice is the ruling passion from the highest to the lowest, and where a present or remuneration is demanded by every man, woman, and child, for the smallest service.

Manfalout boasts a tolerable bazaar, where, during our visit we were much amused by the curiosity of the rude Arnout soldiery, some of whom are quartered here, in inspecting our fire arms, my highly finished double barrellled gun exciting their greatest admiration, especially the strength and mechanism of the percussion lock, the principle of which the Oriental gunsmiths are but imperfectly acquainted with, and cannot yet imitate. The fineness of our English powder too astonished them exceedingly, and we parted with these intractable warriors on the best of terms. We find the people in every town and village we enter extremely well disposed towards us, ready to give every information in their power, and to shew us where any game is to be found; only disagreeable when a bargain for meat, vegetables, bread, charcoal, &c., is negotiating, when their disposition to over-reach and haggle about a para seldom fails to shew itself: but this unpleasant intercourse we find it on every account best to leave to Mr. L's Nubian (Berber) servant, Ameen, who speaks the language, and knowing the value of the various articles we consume, conducts the greater part of our

marketing, rendering us an account of the money disbursed every day or two. Ameen is brother to the Nubian attendant on the hippopotamus in the Zoological Gardens, who accompanied the animal from its native country to England, where he still is. Ameen sometimes receives letters from his brother, who wishes him to join him at the gardens, and says he has got money in a Savings bank. He occasionally finds means of sending his brother Ameen little presents, such as an English penknife, but the latter does not seem to relish the idea of quitting Egypt for England, as from his known respectability at Cairo, Ameen is sure of a comfortable livelihood, as servant or dragoman to travellers going up the Nile. Ameen is much pleased at my offer to become the bearer of a letter to his brother on my return home next year.

The scenery for several days past has been interesting, the left, or eastern bank of the Nile, being uniformly bounded by a lofty limestone ridge, increasing in height and boldness as we advance southward, sometimes receding to a distance of several miles from the river banks, and at other times almost skirting the shore, and often jutting out into bold headlands, or occasionally rising into peaks of considerable elevation. This ridge, which now (at Siout, *Dec. 9th*,) begins to close in on the valley of the Nile on both sides like a vast and magnificent wall, is a continuation of the Mokattan chain which commences at the Red Sea, and is already of respectable height at Cairo, but here assumes quite a mountainous aspect. The range is the boundary of the great western (Lybian) and eastern deserts, and is perfectly devoid like them of even a blade of grass; it now quite shuts out by its continuous elevation every glimpse of the desert, which before, (at least on the east side)

often discovered its ocean-like expanse of sand billows as we held on our course; now, we see only the nearly perpendicular and stratified face of its abrupt, cliff-like terminations, below which, is a broad or narrow strip of land diversified with rich crops of maize, guinea-corn, sugar, clover, wheat, colewort, beans, peas, carrots, cotton, and various garden esculents, as onions, garlic, cabbage, ochras, fennel, coriander, *Corchorus olitorius*, &c. blended at short intervals with villages standing amidst extensive date groves, full of doves and wild pigeons, and with here and there a lovely grove of "*Sant*" (*Acacia Nilotica*), Gum tree (*Acacia vera*), which in Nubia and Abyssinia yields the Gum Arabic of commerce. Both these trees are now loaded with all their sweet scented flowers closely compacted into globose heads like little golden balls. The single fields of guinea-corn especially, are of incredible extent, and afford food and shelter to wild boars, and harbour packs of jackalls that nightly serenade us with their melancholy noise, a whining kind of barking, much like that of a fox, but louder, and more disagreeable. Mr. Lakes shot the other day with his rifle, a very large jackall, when we were out together looking for game, and we anticipate fine sport during the moonlight nights, now coming on, amongst the ruins of Karnac and Luxor, where we hope to eat a pic-nic dinner on Christmas day, and to feast on plum pudding made by the hands of Saad, the only christian, by the way, of our party, besides our three selves, and who has proved a most able cook, in addition to his character as a steady, and we believe too, an honest servant. I cannot say as much for his skill as a laundress, for the display of which, did he possess it, our very limited means afloat afford him little opportunity; for we quite forgot to add a board and smooth-



ing irons to our outfit on leaving Cairo. We dress in linen, which has only been washed over, and hastily dried in the sun and air; the fronts are all puckers, and the collars the same, and without a particle of starch in them. Shaving we have quite abjured in these wild regions as a tedious and unnecessary toilette operation: so we are all decorated with black bushy beards and moustaches of three week's growth, and since we have adopted the *tarboosh*, a close cap of scarlet cloth, with a huge tassel of dark blue silk, worn over another small skull cap of cotton, called a *takeelzel*, we are half-moslem in appearance, if not in creed. I am sure our friends at home would laugh were they to see us, nor am I certain that they would not envy us our river life, and river home in this most splendid and rainless climate.

The soil of the valley of the Nile, particularly that part left dry by the now receding waters, is a sandy loam of a deep brown colour, and of the consistence nearly of paste, so that like that, it is quite plastic, and can be kneaded with the fingers as dough. It is an error to suppose that the soil of the Nile is slime: it can hardly even be called mud when in its state of softest consistence; and its aspect conveys the impression of its exuberant fertility, which might be still further increased by the use of manures, and a proper rotation of crops, of which the Egyptian farmers have no idea. The towns and villages are constructed of unburnt brick made of the alluvial earth, and consequently present the same colour as that of the ground they stand upon, while the skins of the inhabitants are of a hue very closely approaching that of their native soil, and the scanty clothing of the fellahs or agricultural labourers, as well as that of the greater part of the poor in the



towns and villages, is a single wrapper of a very coarse and thick cloth, also of a deep brown, made probably of the undyed wool of the native sheep, whose fleeces are exactly of that colour, white sheep being seldom seen in this country; hence, brown is the prevailing colour in an Egyptian landscape; the desert, the river, the people, the cattle, the houses, are all brown, or of a tint in which brown is the chief constituent; it is a swart land of grave and sombre colours, even the green of the few species of trees indigenous to, or cultivated in Egypt, is of a deep and dark, rather than of a light and lively shade, that of the date palm and olive is greyish or glaucous; of the acacia, mimosa, and sycamore, either dark or dull, viewed in the mass. I have seen nothing as yet like the verdure I was led to expect from the descriptions usually given by travellers in this country; there is no lack of green it is true, but it is in strips or patches, intersecting which the native brown of the soil is ever presenting itself in strong contrast. No vegetation adorns either bank of the Nile along any part of the vast distance I have yet traversed from Alexandria hither (to Osiout); its shores gradually increase in height as we advance, and although of a rocky character in a few places, are for the most part composed of a soft dark brown alluvium, which is constantly crumbling, and falling into the stream, often in masses from a few hundred weight to several tons at a time, by which the course of the river is constantly undergoing alteration: so that even were it navigable for vessels of any great burden, which the innumerable shallows and shifting banks preclude, any survey would in a few years be wholly obsolete and useless.

Siout, Esiout, or Osiout, *December 9th.* We arrived at this place, at present the capital of Upper Egypt,

and the ancient Lycopolis, after a tedious passage from Manfalout, owing to the wind failing us entirely. As we propose stopping a day or two here on our return voyage, to visit the tombs and grottos in the mountains behind the town, I will not now attempt a description of a place imperfectly seen by us as yet, but will only give a slight sketch of its situation, which is the most picturesque of any town we have yet visited in Egypt. The valley of the Nile is here exceedingly broad, and the range of lofty limestone hills which shuts it out from the desert, recedes from both banks, leaving a wide plain of great fertility, and in a high state of cultivation between the river banks and the hills. The town is the third in size of those in Egypt, and is stated to have a population of 20,000 souls. Like Cairo, it is walled round, and the bazaars rank next to those of that city for the variety of goods they display. Siout is noted for its manufactures of pipe bowls, some of which we inspected, and were surprised at the elegance of the designs of the better kinds, and the finish of the workmanship. The limestone ranges on the western, or Lybian side of the valley, assuming here quite a mountainous character, are pierced with innumerable tombs quite visible from the plain below. The approach to Siout from the small village of El Khamra, which may be called its port, and about the same distance from the town as Boulak is from Cairo, is exceedingly pretty, passing along a broad raised causeway planted with willows, and running across fertile fields and gardens to the very gate of the town. We rode to the city on excellent donkeys to make purchases, followed by the greater part of our Nubians, decked out in their best attire, Ameen in particular, and our boy Mohammed, far outshining the others in the taste and gaiety of their

costume, and bent like ourselves, on marketing at the last town where coffee, tobacco, and other requisites can be obtained of good quality. Having spent an hour or two in visiting the bazaars and the few other objects of interest it presents, we took leave for a time of the capital of Upper Egypt, and returned to our boat at El Khamra.

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Believe me,

Dear E——

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter VIII.)

ON BOARD THE MARY VICTORIA,

Off Ekhmim Upper Egypt.

*December 12th, 1850.*

My dear E——

SINCE my last, dated *December 6th*, was finished, we have advanced, as far as the town opposite to which I am now writing, towards the great centre of our Nilotic aspirations, Thebes, which we may confidently expect to reach in a week at farthest. Our voyage progresses merrily, if not rapidly, but we all heartily

wish the weather warmer in the mornings and evenings, for it is now so cold that we cannot remain up with comfort, even in our snug cabin, unless very warmly clad. To day, we have been shivering in a north wind, even at noon, and sitting out in the fore-part of the boat has hardly been practicable at any hour, nor indeed have we been able for some days past to enjoy the evening breeze at and after sunset; whilst the mornings, till nine o'clock at least, are so cold, that the water we wash in makes our fingers almost numb when dipped into it. The whole of this day the sky has been without a cloud: the strong northern breeze blowing directly against the course of the stream, has raised its broad expanse into minature billows, on which our little craft rocks as if at sea, and sometimes heels over in a manner rather alarming to nervous landsmen, under the pressure of the gale on her huge lateen sail. This obliquity of position is very well during the day, when every door is open fore and aft, and in case of capsizing, a chance of escape would be offered by clinging to the hull should she float, or of being rescued by the Arabs, who are all expert swimmers, from a watery grave; but at night it is far from pleasant to feel oneself vibrating alternately between the two extremities of an inclined plane, with the multifarious impediments of bedclothes, musquito curtains, and two pairs of folding cabin doors bolted on the outside, interposed to bar free egress in an attempt to gain the open deck, the only part where assistance and safety could be looked for should a sudden flaw of wind from the lofty hills that now hem in the valley of Egypt, lay our little floating tenement on her beam ends. Our crew would gladly make fast to the bank every night at sunset, and after having tired themselves out with singing to the *darrabatakako* or small drum of

the country, which we jocosely call the Arabian night's entertainment, quietly turn in, or rather lie about on deck, for the night; but we are so anxious to reach the second cataract in the hope of being able to penetrate into Nubia, that we have issued standing orders to the Reis to make sail at all times of the night when the wind serves. The present cold weather is agreeable neither to ourselves, nor to our Nubian boatmen, and the desire of getting into warmer latitudes is shared by every one on board, each one of us looking forward with satisfaction to the prospect of passing the coldest part of the winter between the tropics, which we shall probably enter before the new year dawns upon us. To-day has been the only one hitherto that could be called really disagreeable; for though brilliantly clear, the sun had little power to temper the chilliness of the high northerly wind, which whilst it blew so keenly as to render exercise indispensable during exposure to it, raised clouds of sand from the adjoining desert like mist from the river, which annoyed us when ashore by getting into our eyes, and powdering our clothes all over.

Ekhmim, the ancient Panopolis, is a considerable town to all appearance, for we did not land there, as we ran past it with a cold north wind on the evening of this day, reserving our visit to its lions till our return. It was once celebrated amongst the cities of Egypt for its temples to Pan, and in later times for a line of powerful princes. The hills forming the abrupt termination of the table-land of the desert on either side of the Nile, are here very bold; and on the eastern bank rise immediately behind the city of Ekhmim, which with its palm-groves and the broad river *now* washing its very walls, once a quarter of a mile distant from the



banks, has a very picturesque appearance. The scenery of the Nile in Upper Egypt is far bolder and more romantic than I could have supposed, and appears to become more and more so as we advance. In one place, the mountain verge of the eastern desert is actually washed by the river; the western desert (the Lybian) is mostly much more distant, and looks like a majestic wall, behind which the sunsets, in cloudless skies, are truly magnificent.

*Girgeh, December 13th.* This, almost the last town of any considerable size before reaching the cataracts, derives its name from St. George, the tutelar saint of the Copts, and is not on the site of any ancient place of note. We arrived here early in the morning, when Mr. P. and myself accompanied by Ameen, went into the town to lay in a stock of bread, and other articles of consumption which are beginning to run low. Girgeh forms no exception to other Egyptian towns, which are all pretty exact counterparts of one another in the main points of dirt, dust, dogs and squalidness, although many of the villages are very pretty, embowered as they mostly are in groves of date-palms and acacias, *Acacia nilotica*. Marketing in an Egyptian town is at once a very amusing and difficult business, involving a vast waste of time and words in the purchase of goods not amounting perhaps to sixpence in value. In another place I shall hope to give you some account of our bargains for flour, bread, charcoal, mishmish (dried apricots,) and sundry other articles, mostly comestibles, some of which we find are always needed, or on the point of being exhausted. At Girgeh we bought four fine live turkeys at sixteen and nineteen piastres the pair, or, at a rough estimate, in English money, two shillings and eightpence and three shillings and twopence.

We hope to be at Thebes in a few days, probably on the 18th, if we can get a wind to take us; for at present we have only calms, and light baffling breezes, with occasionally a brisk and favourable wind from the northward for a few hours; and even this is often made of little avail, or rendered contrary, by the turnings and curves in the river, or in rounding the numerous islands and sand banks.

When marketing in the bazaars and shops of Girgeh, (where by the bye, as well as at Siout, there are one or two elaborately designed minarets to the principal mosques,) we were beset by the natives offering us antique coins for sale, amongst which was an English farthing of Queen Victoria! and stranger still, the top of a green glass bottle with the name of the liquor it contained or that of the vendor cast on it, such as we so often see upon these vessels in England. As the poor fellows who offered us these curious samples of antique numismatics, were wholly unable to read the inscriptions on them, I cannot doubt that the farthing and bottle label, were both proffered in perfect singleness of heart, with the genuine coins, of which several were purchased by Mr. P. for a few paras each. These were mostly Roman or Greek, and I believe were truly what they appeared to be; as Dr. Abbott of Cairo tells me that coins and other relics of ancient times are commonly found at the present day, and that those offered for sale, may in general be depended on as genuine antiques; but that articles of real interest or value are, as they ever have been, rare, and for the most part find their way into the hands of those who know how to turn their possession to advantage.

*December 15th.* Since leaving Ekhmim, our progress has been exceedingly slow from the want of wind, the

turnings of the river, and the numerous shoals and sand banks amongst which we have to work our way. Still, our voyage has not been without great interest, from the bold and beautiful scenery of the valley of the Nile in this part, and from the appearance during the last few days of a couple of Egyptian memorabilia, the Doum or Thebaic palm (*Cucifera Thebaica*), and Crocodiles. The first of these lions of the Nile, shewed itself in a solitary specimen which caught the eye in a grove of date trees a few miles on this side of Ekhnim, which city is close upon the northern limit of the Theban palm, beyond which it is only seen occasionally in a cultivated condition. Yesterday, however, (*December 14th*,) we came upon them growing in plenty along the eastern bank of the river between Girgeh and Farshoot, whilst taking our evening ramble; the trees bore plenty of fruit, but still unripe. The *Cucifera Thebaica* is a small palm, at least I have not as yet seen any exceeding twenty-five or thirty feet in height, and is remarkable amongst the trees composing this numerous family, for having the stems repeatedly branched at top in a forked manner, the branches terminating in a tuft of large fan shaped leaves, with prickly foot stalks. The fruit which is produced in long clusters, is of the size of a good large apple, and of a russet brown when ripe, consisting, like the cocoa nut, of a central nucleus, surrounded by a tough, fibrous outer coat, which when chewed has a sweet taste, compared with truth to that of gingerbread, which it resembles almost exactly; but the outer coat, although eatable, is so dry and husky, and withal so sparing in quantity, and difficult to separate from the nut it encloses, that as a fruit tree, this palm can never rival the date, and whoever has tasted one of the fruits, will I think hardly be at the

trouble of eating a second. Perhaps the only ripe specimens I have seen, which were in the market at Cairo, might not have been the best of their kind; but the fact that the fruit of the Doum palm is but occasionally brought from Upper to Lower Egypt, and is eaten only by the peasantry, and poorer classes in the towns, proves the little estimation in which it is held, and which is probably equal to its real merit in its best state of perfection. At the time I am writing, (Monday evening, *December 15th*,) we have passed Farshoot, and the Doum palm now mixes with the more majestic date tree everywhere along the river banks, and in some places grows by itself, or is the prevailing species.

The scenery at this part of our voyage is extremely bold and picturesque, the banks of the river are very steep, and basaltic rock has appeared in some places cropping out at the water's edge, whilst the cliffs that bound the valley on the east present a magnificent aspect from their mountainous elevation, and the vast sand-drifts that fill every nook and hollow from the deserts at their back; and especially beautiful do they look when their bare yellow sides reflect the rays of the setting sun, which for some days past, has gone down in a glowing and cloudless, but cold sky. Nearly co-equal with the limits of the Doum palm, is the line that bounds the distribution of the crocodile northwards, at the present day; for in ancient times it would appear to have ranged much lower in the Nile, and it is said to have even inhabited the Delta, and Lower Egypt properly so called. In our day, the crocodile is said first to make its appearance at or near Osiout, but we saw none of them during our short stay at that city; but on Sunday morning (*December 14th*,) on arriving about a quarter of a mile from a sand bank, which we learned from



our boatmen was a favourite resort of these reptiles, and which is a little beyond Girgeh, between that town and Farshoot, we had the great gratification of seeing a whole herd, if I may use the term, of these river monsters emerge one by one from the stream as the sun gained power, and assemble on the sand bank, where we soon counted no less than sixteen of various sizes, huddled together, and evidently enjoying the warmth of the bright and unclouded morning-ray. The smallest of those we saw, as we watched them through our telescopes, seemed to be at least eight or nine feet in length, and several were absolute leviathan monsters, as hideous and terrific as can well be imagined, not less certainly than sixteen or eighteen feet long, with bodies as thick as that of a horse; the huge jaws of some gaping wide apart as they lay listless and motionless on the sand, or occasionally dragged themselves forth from the water to lie along like huge logs or trunks of palm trees, to which they have no inconsiderable general resemblance in the rough and scaly covering of their unwieldy forms, knotted with crested protuberances. We were so near them, that by aid of our telescopes, we could perfectly watch their motions, and discover their minutest characters, longing all the time to be amongst them with our guns, and planning an attack we intend making on their strong hold when we return down the river. We propose to throw up a masked battery of sand the day previous to our attack, and landing on the beach before day-break the following morning, to open fire on them from behind our temporary fort as they come up out of the river to bask in the sun. We have furnished ourselves with balls of hardened lead expressly for the purpose, and trust to be able to achieve the feat of shooting a crocodile, and carrying off his jaws and skull as trophies



of our campaign against the ancient monster deities of Egypt's river. The young specimens of the crocodile of the Nile that are occasionally brought alive to England, give no idea whatever of the hideous deformity, and ferocious aspect of the full grown animal. A more revolting creature does not exist; yet I believe that to man they are seldom, if ever, dangerous, being extremely watchful and timid, waddling slowly down to, and sliding into the water, on the too near approach of any person; and we observed the sand banks occupied by numbers of aquatic birds, geese, cranes, pelicans, &c., walking about the outstretched monsters as if possessed with a feeling that they were in no peril of their lives in the society of these ugly reptiles. A boat, in rounding the bank, fired a gun at the crocodiles, but not within range, which had the effect of sending them all pell mell into the water, but in a few minutes afterwards the noses of one or two might be seen emerging, and soon the sand bank became repeopled with the fugitives. We little expected at this season to find crocodiles half so numerous, seeing how cold the mornings are now, and how low the temperature of the Nile is, compared with that which it attains a few months later or earlier than the present.

\* \* \* \*

Always my dear E.,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

( Letter IX. )

ON BOARD THE MARY VICTORIA,

Near Kenneh, opposite Dendereh,

*December 16th, 1850.*

My dear E——

I gladly avail myself of the opportunity afforded me by the place we are now approaching, of posting these sheets at the last town in Egypt from whence letters can be dispatched to Cairo with any certainty or regularity. I am not without hopes of finding one from you at Kenneh, where, if the wind does not fail us, we shall arrive to day or early to morrow ; at all events, I trust to have tidings from you on our return from Nubia. Will you be so kind as to let Mr. Lawrence have the two little packets of seeds of Egyptian plants ; he will no doubt raise them in pots, and keep them carefully from frost : it is very probable that both may be planted out in the summer. I am collecting everything in the shape of seeds I can find, but there are not many of the native plants at present in flower, much less in seed ; and I fancy I shall reap a richer harvest in this way on our return voyage, than in the ascent of the river.

*Tuesday Evening, December 16th.* A brisk wind is fast wafting us to Kenneh on the opposite bank of the river, near to which stand the magnificent ruins of

Dendereh, on which we hope to feast our longing eyes to-morrow. The weather is gloriously serene and sunny, and were it not for the coldness of the nights and mornings, would be perfect, for the temperature even at mid-day is that of the mildest summer weather : however this night it is somewhat warmer, and our merry hearted Nubians are amusing themselves, and, as they would fain believe, us also with their native Berber songs, with drum accompaniments ; a species of musical entertainment we could well dispense with at this moment when we are engaged in making up our budgets for home, but we cannot find it in our hearts to stop this noisy, but innocent mirth ; for no boat's crew could behave better than ours have done, poor fellows !

I shall look out carefully for small antiquities among the ruins of Dendereh, Thebes, &c., and believe that I can be put in the way of taking *casts* of the smaller inscriptions and hieroglyphics, as you take the brasses in a church, as Mr. P. has just shewn me one taken off on common paper by himself.

Pray remember me most kindly to all our friends at Ryde,

\* \* \* \*

Believing me, always,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter X.)

THE MARY VICTORIA NILE BOAT,

*off Kenneh December 17th 1850.*

My dear E——

WE set out at an early hour this morning for the town of Kenneh or Ginneh as it is sometimes written, it is situated about a mile or rather more from the Nile, which however when at its height overflows the flat ground which lies between it and the town. The approach is exceedingly pretty, almost as much so as that to Osiout, the valley of the Nile being here extremely picturesque from the grandeur of the lofty craggy barrier that shuts it in from the Desert on either side. Both the valley and the river are here of great breadth, and the former is richly adorned with groves of lofty date palms interspersed with doum palms which are now abundant in all the fields, and of which I have to day seen some very fine specimens in full fruit. The country is everywhere beautifully green with the tender springing wheat and barley, which are here about as far advanced as in England in April or May, and will be ready for harvesting in April, or at the end of March. At this time the Guinea corn, of which vast quantities are raised in Egypt, is being gathered in, and the sugar harvest will succeed a week or two later. The quantity

of garden vegetables grown in Egypt is prodigious, the whole valley of the Nile may be regarded as one great kitchen garden, and all the ancient plant deities of Egypt still find favour in the sight of the modern inhabitants. Besides the vast fields of wheat, barley, maize, Guinea corn, and other cereal grains, you everywhere meet with extensive plots of Nile's exuberant land, bearing heavy crops of carrots, coleseed, onion, leeks, lentils, lupins, chick peas, (pois chiches of the French, garvanzos of the Spaniards,) lettuces, cabbages, a species of radish called figi, cauliflowers, French beans, beans, (for which Egypt has always been famous) ochises, (*Hibiscus esculentus*), melolleyehs (*Corchorus olitorius*), besides melons, water-melons, gourds, vegetable marrow, tomatos, sessama, and other esculent seeds or roots, while much of the soil is devoted to sugar, cotton, indigo, (*indigofera argentea*), rice (in the Delta chiefly,) clover, coriander, mallows (*Malva rotundifolia* in Egypt grown in quantities as a pot herb,) tobacco, (chiefly I think the inferior species,) and other products, all of which one meets with in the open fields, not merely in gardens, and in quantities that would astonish our farmers and market gardeners at home. It is no uncommon thing to see a field of maize or Guinea corn extend over a mile or two in length along the banks of the river: those of wheat, barley, and other cereal grain are much smaller, though still of considerable extent: the fields of clover, carrots, and other crops, are perhaps not usually greater in size than in our own country.

Kenneh is a town of some importance (the ancient Cænopolis or Neapolis,) the residence of a provincial governor, and garrisoned by troops. It is famous for its manufacture of porous earthen jars called gullahs, used all over Egypt for cooling drinking water, they



are made here, and at a few other places higher up the Nile, for the purpose of exportation. A given number of the gullahs is joined together in the water, and covered with palm branches, then a second stratum of pots is placed above, and the whole, forming an immense raft, is floated down the river by boatmen, who reside on these singular structures, to Cairo, Alexandria, and the intermediate places along the Nile. Numbers of these rafts have passed us for the last two days, each composed of some thousands of jars or rather jugs, bound together with the palm tree bands, the lower stratum floating upright in the water bearing up the flooring on which the second stratum is placed, and across this last layer spaces are left for the crew to pass along between the frail cargo whilst on their voyage downwards, which of course is chiefly effected by the currents, aided at times by the wind. We found the bazaars at Kenneh as well supplied as those at Siout, and having finished our marketing there, and delivered our dispatches for England addressed to the British Consul at Cairo, into the hands of Seyd Hosseyn, a venerable old gentleman who acts as consular agent at Kenneh, and with whom we took coffee, and a whiff of the chibouk in the open street, in front of the house, Mr. P. and myself set off with Ameen on donkey-back, in full anticipation of delight to view the first lion on our way to upper Egypt, the temple of Dendereh, (the ancient Tentyris,) situated about two miles and a half (by the way we took) from the western bank of the Nile, and nearly opposite Kenneh. Our path, (for here there are no roads,) lay between richly cultivated fields of Guinea corn, cotton, &c. among date palms growing in clumps, or standing singly, interspersed with beautiful tufted tamarisks, and gum trees, (*acacia nilotica*),

generally called Sant. Here the doum palm is a most conspicuous feature of the landscape, and noble specimens intermixed with the date, and the two other trees just mentioned, constitute beautiful groves and glades between the river and the temple of Dendereh. In lower Egypt the date palm forms vast groves both native and artificial, and every village almost stands in, or by, a planted palm wood. The trees in that part, and in central Egypt, are tall, slender, and graceful, but the stems are usually single, seldom two from the same root, and still more rarely three. In upper Egypt, on the contrary, the date groves are far less formal than in the lower and central districts; and whilst the trees rise up, as there, to sixty or seventy feet or more, this palm grows isolated as well as dispersed in picturesque clumps, and from one and the same root spring not only two and three, but four, five, or six stems rising obliquely, each stem bearing its noble crown of leaves at the summit. The intermixture also in upper Egypt of the humbler, but not less beautiful doum palm, which does not grow wild in Lower Egypt, contributes to the vast superiority of the former over the latter country in natural beauty, I had no previous idea of the lovely features of the superior parts of the valley of the Nile, in innumerable places, as between Siout and Thebes, which are so much bolder than any thing I expected to see. But to return to Dendereh. Very soon after starting, we caught sight of a low looking building in the distance, standing on the verge of the desert, and on the edge of the cultivated ground, small, and extremely un-imposing in appearance. At that point of view it resembled some unfinished structure of modern times, it might have been a coach house and stables, or a range of shops or warehouses. A feeling of disappointment came over us when

we ascertained that this mean looking building must be the celebrated temple we were in search of; as it was the only object of the kind in sight, and stood in the direction in which we ought to look out for the renowned ruin.

As we continued drawing nearer, our disappointment seemed fated to remain undiminished, but when we arrived at the noble *pylon* or entrance gate, and far more so, when we stood at the threshold of the magnificent portico of the great temple of Athor (the Egyptian Venus), and looked across its colossal row of sculptured columns into the great hall beyond, disappointment gave way to delight and astonishment. Every square foot of this vast edifice, which at a short distance seemed to us so mean in design, and insignificant in dimensions, is covered with hieroglyphic writing, and though said to have been executed in the decline of Egyptian art, many of the figures and human profiles excited our admiration by their beauty. I will not attempt a description of this or of any of the other vast structures of ancient Egypt with which I hope speedily to become acquainted, because you can easily procure books that describe them both better, and more fully than I can do. I shall therefore only observe that Mr. P. and myself spent the remainder of the day in exploring the elaborately sculptured, and finely proportioned chambers of the great temple of Denderah, and also descending into its subterranean passages and rooms, all *covered* like those above ground, with an endless profusion of hieroglyphics and figures in bas-relief. These subterranean galleries and chambers are perfectly dry, but the heat and closeness are excessive, and in some places, the effluvium from the bats' dung is extremely annoying and irritating to the eyes and

nostrils, whilst these animals themselves alarmed by the lights and noise of visitors, fly around in the narrow passages in swarms, sometimes extinguishing the candles that serve to direct the explorer along the mystically carved labyrinth, the mazes of which he has the boldness to attempt threading. On our return voyage we propose to revisit Dendereh, and every other remarkable monument of antiquity, of which we are now indulging ourselves with general views only; and we trust that Mr. L. who, I regret to say, is too unwell at present even to leave the boat, will then be a sharer of our enjoyment.

We live merrily, and on the whole very comfortably in our little bark; nevertheless we have not an inch of room unoccupied, and could wish that our state and store rooms were better divided for the purposes to which we are obliged to put them. Our faithful and trusty steward Ameen reposes nightly under the loose planking of the main deck forward, between our stock of bread and potatoes on one hand, and a pile of oranges *en papillotes* on the other, whilst a set of small shelves against the partition which divides my sleeping cabin from the adjoining one, tenanted by Mr. P. and Mr. L., and which is at the foot of my bed, is a perfect Italian warehouse stored with bottles of pickles, curry powder, vinegar, cases of preserved soup, sardines, powder and shot, &c. besides sustaining a little dispensary in the form of a medicine chest, which has proved of great use to our invalid fellow traveller. At the head of Mr. P's. and Mr. L's. bed places, are shelves containing our travelling library, which is pretty voluminous for the space we can allot to it, and as you may suppose, the books relate chiefly to the country we are traversing. Under the bed places, part of the space is taken up with



lockers, in which are stowed away many bulky articles, and amongst the rest, a frail basket completely filled with five para or fuddah pieces, to the amount of £ 5 sterling ; which small coin is indispensable in the country towns and villages of Upper Egypt and Nubia, where change for the larger silver or gold coin of the empire is very difficult to be obtained.

In this cabin too, there hangs a map of Egypt (that published by the Society for the diffusion of useful knowledge), a copy of which I purchased at Cairo for two shillings, and had mounted on mill-board expressly for consultation during the voyage, and which we find extremely convenient. Our crew of boatmen and our three servants, Saad, Ameen, and the boy Mohammed, inhabit the fore part of the vessel ; and the former sleep on the deck, wrapped in their cloaks and other garments, or occasionally on the roof of the cabin, which is also the abode of our live stock of poultry. The workmanship of these native built Nile boats is rough and unfinished beyond belief, neither doors nor windows are even tolerably fitted, and there is not a screw used in the whole structure ; the very locks and bolts, such as they are, are merely fastened with nails to the wood-work. Our mosquito curtains now serve us excellently to keep the cold breeze at night from chilling us by the many entrances the boat builder has provided ; but to which, during the day, from nine o'clock till five in this glorious climate of never-ceasing sunshine, we have neither cause nor desire to put a stop.

*Luxor Village (Thebes), December 20th.* Arrived here after a very slow but pleasant passage from Kenneh, the weather for the last few days perfectly cloudless, not a speck visible in the pale milky sky, a delicate thin blue haze enveloping the distant crags and peaks of this



part of the valley. The great difference of temperature however, between the day and night, continues to be felt most unpleasantly by us all ; for, although so close on the tropic, the cold at night, and in the early morning so late as nine o'clock, gives the impression on the system of active frost, or a very near approach to it, when the thermometer indicates  $50^{\circ}$  or  $48^{\circ}$ ; but the instrument, being fixed against the entrance to the cabin on the wood-work which in our upward voyage is exposed to the sun all day, retains a temperature through the night above that of the air on the river. This is the only situation in which it is practicable to hang it, where it can of course only give an approximation to the truth. The heat indicated by it is much too high during the day, when the air in the shade is seldom much below or above  $70^{\circ}$ , and, at dawn, is probably not under  $40^{\circ}$  at this season. On making fast to the shore at Luxor, our boat was beset by a host of guides and donkey boys as numerous and importunate as at Cairo, or at an English watering-place ; but dispensing for the present with their services, we employed the little daylight remaining in taking a cursory survey of Luxor and its antiquities.

\* \* \* \*

Believe me,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

( Letter XI. )

ON BOARD THE NILE BOAT MARY VICTORIA,  
Upper Egypt.

*December 23rd, 1850.*

My Dear E——

MY last sheet left us at Luxor, on the evening of the 20th, moored close to the shore for the night, and just starting to take such a hasty glance at its lions, as we at present propose to indulge ourselves with: intending to make their more intimate acquaintance on our return down the mighty river, whose broad stream we shall then have navigated.

The town of Luxor is like every other in Egypt, an accumulation of mean houses of unburnt brick, and mud hovels, but the beautiful country in which it stands on the wide and fertile plain of Thebes, and the massy ruins of the great temple of Amunoph III and Rameses II, together with the colossal obelisk, the fellow to which now adorns the Place de la Concorde at Paris, rising high above the modern walls, give Luxor a more imposing aspect from whatever side you approach it, than any of the places we have yet seen on the banks of the Nile. But excepting the obelisk which stands isolated in the middle of the town, and is truly a fine object, from its gigantic size, height, and perfect condition, one must be deeply imbued with the antiquarian spirit,

to fall into raptures with any other of the existing remains of Theban magnificence. The ruins at Luxor struck Mr. P. and myself, as ponderous structures, quite devoid of elegance of design, and finished execution, and, excepting the great pylon (portico or gateway), forming the principal entrance to the temple, and facing the river, little else of these remains is in a state to give us much idea of what the effect of the entire building might have been in the palmy days of the Egyptian Monarchy; so much are they encumbered with and encroached upon by the mounds of rubbish, and miserable hovels of more recent times, crammed into every available corner of the ancient walls which could be made subservient to the uses of a modern population. The colossal statues of Rameses II are more than half concealed by the accumulation of soil around them, and are besides much mutilated. The sculptured ornaments and hieroglyphics are not numerous at Luxor, and seemed alike poor in conception and in execution: the closer examination we intend making on our return, may disclose beauties unseen during the very superficial view we took on our upward voyage. I fear however, that the gorgeous magnificence of the temple at Denderah, where grandeur, taste, and skill are so strikingly united with admirable preservation, quite unfitted us for relishing the heavy, and comparatively unadorned, barbaric, and now dilapidated structures of Luxor, thrown down and half buried beneath the surface of a soil, the accumulation of many ages, or hidden in great part by the squalid homes of the Egypt of our day. I must however again except the noble granite Obelisk of one enormous block, the height of which I am unable to state, but some idea may be conveyed of its vast proportions, when I mention, that amidst my antiquarian researches, having

an eye to the replenishment of our larder on board I was unromantic enough to fire at what I took for a pigeon, perched like an idol-bird, on the very apex of this stupendous monolith, but which proved after all, to be an *uneatable* bird of prey, so indistinct were objects rendered by the distance from the eye, although that interval was but equal to the length of a single block of granite. I was prepared not to expect any very striking remains at Luxor, as compared with other places that compose the aggregate of ruins named Thebes! for there is no special town, village, or other locality, so called, now in existence: still, I must own to feeling considerable disappointment in what I *did* see, and in this I had the sympathy of my fellow traveller, who declared himself quite as much dissatisfied as I was.

The next morning, *December 21st*, we mounted our donkeys (as excellent as those at Siout) and with their drivers, and Ameen and Mohammed leading the cavalcade, we passed over part of the beautiful and extensive plain of Thebes, followed by a host of unbidden and clamorous guides, to Karnak, about a mile and a half from Luxor, with which it is supposed to have been joined by a continuous avenue of sphinxes. The valley of the Nile at Thebes is extremely wide, and the never-ceasing mountain barrier that forms its boundary on both banks, rises here into outlines the most abrupt and picturesque possible, and encloses a vast plain, teeming with inexhaustible riches in fields of corn, cotton, indigo, and esculent vegetables of every description. The day was magnificent, the usual pale blue sky was without a speck, and a thin hot haze softened down, without impairing, the distinctness of the distant craggy steeps of the Theban mountains. High rose our expectations, as on nearing the object of our morning's ride, we sighted



the massive columns and gateways of Karnak, through the long avenue of sphinxes or dromos, once the path by which votaries went from Luxor to the vast temple that formed a fitting termination to so magnificent an approach. But alas! we were doomed to feel disappointment greater than any experienced by us at Luxor the day before. On entering the precincts of the great temple, we became painfully sensible how much antiquarian enthusiasm; and the proneness of travellers to make the most of every remarkable object on their route, had exaggerated the extent and magnificence of Karnak. I am quite ready to admit that the general effect of the buildings here when perfect, must have been grand, perhaps extremely so; the avenue of sphinxes, when entire, must have formed a noble approach to the temple, to judge from the most perfect of those remaining; but even the few in any tolerable preservation are but parts by which to judge of them when whole; the rest are reduced to small and shapeless blocks of stone; and imagination is obliged to supply that uniformity in magnitude, and excellence of workmanship, without which they must have failed in grandeur of effect. The truth is, we expected to find the avenue of sphinxes in much better preservation, and our imaginations less drawn upon to fill up deficiencies in this, and in most other portions of the edifice. The pylon or gate, at which the above avenue terminates, is undoubtedly a fine object as a whole: but the hieroglyphics and sculptures are poorly executed on this, and as we thought, on the most part of the structures at Karnak,—numbers of them being little better than such rude carvings of natural objects as a plough boy, or any other country lad, might easily execute with his knife in stone of equal softness,—flat, tame scratches, instead of deeply chiselled and boldly



designed figures, which we thought to have seen here as at Denderah, and have since seen in the beautiful, and richly wrought temples at Esne and Edfou. The columns in the grand temple at Karnak struck us both forcibly as being inelegant and poor in design, the ornaments of the capitals especially paltry, and in the worst taste, as if belonging to the earliest state of Egyptian art; which is one great reason perhaps why these ruins are so extravagantly be-praised, and their beauties magnified by the professed and zealous antiquary, in whose eyes age is the greatest of recommendation, and the highest of merits. The remains at Karnak are for the most part in a very dilapidated state, and greatly encumbered as usual with mounds and heaps of rubbish both of ancient and modern date, causing the various parts to appear isolated, as if originally unconnected with one another, which detracts from the general effect by destroying the primitive unity of design. Others have expressed themselves disappointed with Karnak, and many more would avow the same feeling had they the courage or candour to do so, or were disposed to view Egyptain antiquities with a sober unprejudiced eye, seeing things as they really are, with all their defects as well as beauties, and being determined not to let imagination betray them into such extravagant encomiums as we meet with in many authors on this and on other subjects. A popular writer on Egypt gives an overdrawn picture of the "teeming vitality" of the Nile, enough to frighten any timid nervous person from approaching its banks. I can however safely assure such persons that glancing lizards are very far indeed from *innumerable*, being only seen at intervals, small, harmless, and pretty; except it be their near relation the huge unwieldy crocodile, or the supposed friendly fore-

warner to man of his being nigh, the monitor lizard of the Nile, of which we have seen an occasional specimen basking in the sun along the stream, twice or thrice during our voyage, and one of which Mr. P. had the good fortune to shoot with my gun from the boat, and which measured three feet and a half in total length. Of snakes, I have not fallen in with even a single example, although always on the look out for these reptiles, particularly the cobra of Egypt, and the asp of Cleopatra, i.e., the Cerastes or horned viper, both of which, I hope to meet with ere long; but reptiles of this class (ophidians) and indeed of every other except the batrachians (frogs and toads) are seen but at intervals, or not at all, and "countless insects of unimaginable forms" reduce themselves to a few dull, sombre looking and sober paced beetles; a large hornet is common, but inoffensive unless attacked; mosquitoes, in the warmer months, and common house flies, are, it must be owned, a serious annoyance in Egypt; but with these two exceptions, and that of cockroaches on board the craft on the river, insects are remarkably few, both as individuals and species in the valley of the Nile, and are like the indigenous plants, not conspicuous in general for their size, colour, or variety. The writer I have alluded to speaks of the "rank vegetation of the Nile:" in what this rankness consists I am at a loss to conceive, for the Nile is in this respect unlike most other rivers, in that it nourishes few or no marsh plants along its banks; no swampy jungles, or beds of reed intrude on the deep brown alluvium that edges the stream along every part of its course that I have yet traversed. On the higher parts of the rich sandy loam (absurdly called the *slime* of the Nile by high flown writers), flourishes the only rank vegetation to be seen any where, in the shape of

luxuriant fields of corn, cotton, tobacco, lentiles, lupines, and the thousand gifts of nature, which would be most welcome in its rankness to the poor hard working, and oppressed fellah, were he permitted to reap the fruits of his labour for his own benefit, and not for that of another. Beyond this alluvium all is dry and sandy, the earth is clothed with a few species of harsh coarse grasses, amongst which, the Halfeh grass (*Poa cynosuroides*), is preeminently abundant, and groves of date palms and acacias stretch inland to the rocky or sandy barrier that marks the limit of the valley of Egypt: beyond this again is the absolutely naked, solitary, sea-like desert, which in some parts, as for instance, near Assouan, which we are now fast approaching, comes nearly to the very margin of the Nile itself. The sacred lotus of Egypt is not to be found in the entire valley of the Nile in modern times, having long since become extinct, and perhaps it was never indigenous there, but maintained by the care of man in a cultivated condition only. The ornithology of the Nile, is *as to its subject*, less susceptible of exaggeration than its zoology, for the multitudes of water fowl that haunt its stream, may justify the use of the word "swarming." The same expression might be applied with almost as much correctness to the various birds of prey that hover over its banks, far exceeding in variety of species, and number of individuals, any amount of the same tribes in other countries; and, indeed constituting one of the most singular features of this strange and interesting land. Vast are the flocks of geese, pelicans, storks, cranes, spoonbills, flamingoes, shags, and other aquatic birds that overspread the river.

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Believe me, always,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter XII.)

ON BOARD THE NILE BOAT MARY VICTORIA,  
about 8 miles below Dekkeh, Nubia.

*January 5th, 1851.*

My dear E——

AN opportunity will be given me on our arrival at Wady Halfeh (the second Cataract,) or perhaps sooner, of dispatching these two letters to Cairo. I am extremely vexed at being in a position which debars me, and has so long debarred me, from receiving news of you; but I am thankful at the same time, that the channel of communication homewards has not been cut off, so that I can allay your anxiety from time to time, by means of Government or travellers' boats returning to Cairo.

We are now wending our way slowly, but surely, to that Ultima Thule of most Egyptian travellers, the second Cataract at Wady Halfeh, enjoying the sun and warmth of the tropic which we passed yesterday about noon, near Kalabshee. The evenings are no longer anything like so chilly as they were but a few days since: but the mornings are as fresh still as in England, and cool for the latitude. At Assouan, where we arrived on the 30th, we had a very violent gale of wind for nearly twenty-four hours, from the northward, which made the air feel quite chilly all day on the 31st, and filled the atmosphere with sand from the desert.



We expect to reach Wady Halfeh in four or five days ; from whence we propose setting out with six camels, our two servants Ameen and Mohammed, our Egyptian cook Saad, and one or two of the boat's crew, for Dongola and Meroe, about fifteen days journey into the interior. We are promised plenty of sport, gazelles and other game ; and in a large island in the Nile called Argo, there is a solitary hippopotamus well known to the natives, who can at any time find out his haunts, and point him out to strangers. To him we mean to pay a visit, and if possible shoot him, but they say, he bears a charmed life, and laughs at balls, dozens of which his impenetrable hide has defied already, so we can hardly hope to carry off his head for a trophy ; still it will be something to see a hippopotamus in his native wilds.

Our servants and crew (with the exception of the cook Saad, who is an Egyptian, and a Coptic Christian), being all Nubians, are delighted at finding themselves in their own country, and our young reis and the pilot have already visited their native villages, where we allowed them to go ashore to their friends for a few hours. Ameen, as a native of Meroe, and Mohammed, of Dongola, are quite overjoyed at the prospect of seeing their remote homes once more, for the love of country is very strong among the Nubians.

We have engaged the pilot who conducts our little bark through the intricate navigation of the river between the first and second cataracts, to take charge of the boat at Wady Halfeh for two piastres per diem, (about four pence sterling,) during our expedition to the interior of Nubia, or more properly, into the Berber country, for Nubia Proper is included in the district between the first and second Cataracts. This pilot, we



took on board at Assouan, where his contract was signed, sealed, and delivered with due form and ceremony before the Turkish authorities in our presence. We purchased an excellent tent of a most obliging Frenchman named Venderg, a gun merchant, on his way down the river to Cairo from Kordufan with a cargo of that article; for which we paid only the small sum of 200 piastres, or about £2 sterling. We shall leave most of our clothing and other things in the boat, taking no more than is absolutely necessary for the expedition, which will occupy us a month at least; and probably six weeks will elapse before we return to Wady Halfeh, and commence our return voyage down the Nile. We do not expect to fare very luxuriously on our route, but we take with us a good supply of rice, coffee, and macaroni, and our guns will continue no doubt, as heretofore, to furnish our larder with wild fowl, and, as I hope, venison also, for meat is not to be looked for in Nubia, and is execrably bad all over Egypt, with a few occasional exceptions. Poultry, we shall no doubt, be able to procure now and then, should our supply of game run short, and excellent vegetables my fellow travellers can always enjoy, for the valley of the Nile is one vast uninterrupted kitchen garden, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the second cataract, a distance of a thousand miles; and I believe it continues to be such a garden of herbs far beyond that point into Abyssinia. In this land of ancient Ethiopia, or the Cush of Scripture, where we now are, the wheat and barley are at present, nearly a yard high, but not as yet in ear; though they will be ready for the sickle in March. The maize and Guinea corn harvest is just concluded, and the cotton, of which great quantities are grown from below Thebes upwards, is in flower, and

young pod. Senna, both wild and cultivated, is a great article of transmission hence to Cairo and Alexandria for exportation to Europe, and the Khenna shrub, so much used for dyeing the nails and hands red, is another valuable production of Nubia, and plentifully adorns the banks of the Nile; whilst whole fields of onions, lentils, lettuces, beans, lupins, peas, radishes, and most of the remaining vegetables of Lower Egypt, cover both sides of the river in this narrow valley of Nubia, besides tobacco, the castor oil plant, and a host of leguminosæ unknown in British gardens, such as ochroes, cocoas, &c. &c.

On we glide daily towards the south, under a gloriously bright unclouded sky, and a delicious temperature that scarcely any one would at present consider in the least oppressive: but when we get fairly within the tropics as at Meroe in 19° lat. the advancing season will soon begin to make itself felt, and we must expect very hot weather a month or six weeks hence, and to experience the Khamseen winds in full force on or before our arrival at Cairo.

Here already, above the first cataract, the population has much diminished, the villages are smaller, fewer, and farther apart, the inhabitants are darker than in Egypt, and most of them go all but quite naked, and are usually armed with a spear and shield; they are more independent in their bearing than the fellahs of Egypt, and more cleanly in their habits. The valley of the Nile between the cataracts is pretty, but somewhat monotonous; a very narrow strip of highly cultivated land on each side of the river, often not a hundred yards wide, separating the latter from the boundless deserts of moving sand: but the rude grandeur of the granite and sandstone rocks is in many parts extremely

imposing, especially at Assouan, and above the cataract at Philæ, and higher up. The scenery of the first cataract itself, is extremely fine, and has been likened with some truth to that of Glengariff in Ireland.

I am collecting and drying all the plants I can find in the valley of the Nile from Alexandria to our farthest limit, and regret exceedingly not having brought out a set of my own drying boards, with a copious supply of paper and mill-boards, as I am reduced to using a very inferior and troublesome apparatus lent me by Mr. Trail; my own little boards being far too small to be of any service, and I have been forced to put up with a very coarse paper, purchased from time to time at the various towns along the Nile: since however, the sun is rarely obscured, or hides his face for a moment, in this climate, I can manage to dry the specimens very fairly with paper which it would be hardly possible to make use of otherwise, with the limited quantity I have at command; but the drying of the plants goes on speedily and uninterruptedly the whole day long, by placing the boards strapped together on the roof of our boat's cabin in the sun, which of course, is never off the roof between the times of rising and setting; a heavy stone being laid on the boards to give additional pressure; and the whole being taken in at night, on account of the dews which are sometimes very heavy on the river.

From October to April is the vegetating season in Upper Egypt and Nubia: from the middle of April, to the middle or end of September, the great heat and drought arrest the growth of, and wither up herbaceous plants of most kinds; but the very few indigenous trees, being naturally evergreen, resist the intense heat of the long, sultry, cloudless summer, uninjured. The flora of the Nile valley to its termination in Nubia, is of a

singularly northern character: more than nine tenths of the entire vegetation being made up of annual or perennial herbaceous plants of an ordinary looking weedy character, strongly contrasting with the tropical type of the cultivation, sugar, indigo, sessame, cotton, Guinea corn, &c. The number of species is not great, and many of the plants are extremely social or gregarious, which is very unusual in countries so near the equator. Few of the plants of Egypt, and (as far as I have yet seen), of Nubia, have much beauty of blossom, brightness of colour, or gracefulness of form; and they are almost all, either scentless, or unpleasant in odour. The mere lovers of "wild flowers" would find themselves grievously disappointed in Egyptian botany; to them the country would be a flowerless land; but to me, this peculiarity is extremely interesting, proving, what I have always advanced, that there is no necessary inseparable connection between warmth of climate, intense and continuous solar light, and a richly coloured, and varied vegetation; as otherwise, how can it be accounted for that the rich, damp, alluvial soil of the Nile, and the dry hot sands beyond, are incapable of sustaining a vegetation equally varied and luxuriant as that of our own bleak fields at home, or half the number of pretty flowering-plants on the same area of ground? Not a few of the Egyptian and Nubian plants are common weeds in England, or, if not identical in species, belonging to the same genera with our own, and are not a whit more handsome in form and colour, or superior in size to their British congeners. It is not a little strange to find the hosts of warm aromatic sub-shrubs and perennials, that so abound on the shores of Spain, the south of France, Greece and other countries of the Mediterranean, disappearing almost entirely on the still more southerly



and sunny valley of the Nile, where they are replaced by a few sparingly distributed tropical, or sub-tropical plants, whilst the remaining vegetation is of a type more plain and northern than that of the countries just named. The same northern type prevails in the other departments of nature's creation. Very few of the birds have much beauty of colouring, and those commonly seen, are either identical with, or are related to the species with which we are familiar in England, such as the common sparrow, the grey wagtail, the Royston crow, the sky lark, which abounds in every field in Lower and Central Egypt, the Nile plover, very like our common peewit, (also a native,) turtle doves, blue rock pigeons, besides the kestrel, hen-harrier, and various other hawks identical with, or closely resembling British species, as are the owl, kingfisher, and many of the water fowl, some of which latter, as the flamingo, egrets, &c., are common to this country and southern Europe. Of course, there are many birds exclusively African, as pelicans, paddy-birds, &c., but these are seldom distinguished by any elegance or gaiety of plumage: although of course there are certain exceptions to this general sobriety of colouring. As regards insects, I will only mention, that of the few butterflies that flit about the fields of this land of unclouded sunshine and high temperature, that which is by far the most frequently seen, is our English painted lady (*Cynthia Cardui*), a species common with us in certain years during the latter part of summer and autumn; I have noticed as yet but a single insect of this order at all superior in size to the largest of our English lepidoptera: the rest few in number, as regards the species, and not greatly abounding individually, do not exceed our native butterflies either in point of size,



or beauty of colouring ; which is another proof of the position before alluded to.

*January 7th.* We are drawing very near to Korosko, and to Deyr, now the capital of Nubia, at both which places we shall arrive to-morrow if the wind is in our favour, which it will probably be, as the reign of the north wind seems now established for the season. To day we did not make much progress, having been obliged to track most part of it, as, in this tranquil climate, the wind is perpetually falling to calm, and the bends and windings of the river are continually rendering a fair wind a contrary one, and vice versa. The day after to-morrow we shall probably see Abousembal, or Ipsambul, one of the finest remains of Egyptian temples existing ; and on the 10th or 11th, we hope to reach the foot of the second cataract at Wady Halfeh, where we shall probably remain two or more days, to hire camels, and procure some necessaries for our journey into the interior. Will you tell Mr. Lawrence that I am collecting seeds of every kind that I can meet with, including some of the vegetables grown in Egypt for the table, which are curious ; but most, if not all of them, are like the fruits, much inferior to those of our own land, and this, when even of the same species with English ones, as cabbages, carrots, lettuces, &c., but the onions are greatly superior to ours in size and mildness. I intend to forward to England from Cairo all the seeds I shall have collected up to the date of my transmitting my dried Flora of the valley of the Nile : as I cannot of course, travel into Syria encumbered with these bulky and perishable articles.

Although we are now between the tropics, the nights are chilly, obliging us to keep the doors of our cabin closed towards evening : the mornings too, for a couple

of hours before and after sunrise are disagreeably cool, and even during the whole of this morning till about 1 p.m. the fresh northerly breeze drove Mr. P. and myself to sit in the sun at the fore part of the boat for warmth. We now seldom see a sail besides our own ; we are at this moment moored as usual for the night under the steep westward bank of the mighty river whose current we have been stemming for forty three days, through nearly a thousand miles of boundless desert on either hand, and which in this part of our course is never half a mile from either bank, mostly within a hundred yards ; and in many places, you have but to reach the tops of one or other of the banks, to find yourself at once amidst the sand-drifts and savage rocks, that with but few interruptions stretch across the whole of this vast continent of Africa. The views indeed of the desert as we glide onward, are extremely picturesque in every part of the Nile valley, but most particularly so on approaching the first cataract, when vast masses of dark coloured rocks rise from the ocean of white, yellow, or reddish sand into rugged hills piled in unimaginable confusion one upon another, the palm and acacia-clad banks of the Nile running like two narrow edgings of brightest green along an undulating band of silver, for the river here is much clearer than lower down its course, even in Upper Egypt. At this hour (10 o'clock p.m.) my two fellow-travellers have retired to their berths, the reis, crew, and our servants are all stretched on the deck of the boat, or on that of our cabin over our heads, wrapped up in their blankets, capote, or other garments protecting them from the cold night air, fast asleep ; whilst the only sounds heard are the chirping of crickets on the bank above us, and the melancholy howl, or yell of troops of roving jackalls in the adjacent desert It is the

rapid radiation from the boundless waste of treeless and herbless sand and rock into the dry unclouded heavens, which goes on unceasingly from sunset to sunrise, that causes the extraordinary and trying inequality of temperature between day and night, which, at this season more particularly, is one of the few inconveniences of which travellers have to complain in this climate. Such is the extreme dryness of the air in the desert, that a plant I gathered in my walk to day, though only carried in the hand for about an hour and a half, was by the time I returned on board the boat, utterly unfit for pressing, not being merely withered, but actually dried up, parched and crisped, as if it had been put into an oven.

*Korosko, Tropical Nubia, January 8th, a little below Deyr.* We are lying here, made fast under the steep bank of the river for the night, in company with two boats belonging to Mr. Melly of Liverpool, who with his family (his wife, a daughter, and two sons), is absent on a trip to Kordufan, from whence he is not expected back for three months: the boats in the meantime awaiting his return at Korosko, which is the nearest point of departure for that province.

This is a very small poor place, but the emporium of the caravans from Kordufan with goods destined for the Egyptian capital.

And now I fear that I must maintain an unwilling silence for some weeks, till we again return from living in tents, and journeying on camels through deserts and barbarous tribes, to our *snugger* and more civilized mode of life on board the *Mary Victoria*.

\* \* \* \*

With kindest regards to all friends,

Believe me, always,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

( Letter XIII. )

KHARTOUN, at the junction of the White  
and Blue Rivers, lat. 15° N. Long. 34° 10.

*March 20th, 1851.*

My dear E——

SINCE my last was dispatched from Wady Halfeh for Cairo, through the favour of a gentleman going down the river, our little party has penetrated to this remote town, almost in the very heart of tropical Africa, and, thank God, we are all quite well in health and spirits.

In this region of dust, dirt, and barbarism, I am reduced to the necessity of using pens made of reeds, the only ones in use among eastern nations, and which are neither lasting, nor easy to write with; I hope, however, to make this letter tolerably legible, and to send it off before leaving Khartoun, which we do to-morrow, in a boat we have engaged to carry us a day or two up the White Nile, and, on our return, to Berber, a voyage of eight or ten days from hence, where we have an order from the Pasha (Governor of Khartoun), for camels across the desert to Korosko, where we rejoin our little boat the Mary Victoria, which has been awaiting our arrival there for the last two months, to convey us back to Cairo, whither we trust to find ourselves safely transported about the third week in May. I can only give you a very short abstract of our journey

hither from Wady Halfeh. Our caravan consisted of seven camels, three for ourselves, and four for our servants and luggage, tents, and water-skins. The way lay partly along the banks of the Nile, and partly next the desert, amidst scenery of a totally different description from any I had met with before; that of the river, extremely picturesque in many places; that of the desert, wild and savage in the extreme. Although between the tropics, the nights were very cold, with occasional heavy gales of wind, during one of which, about two o'clock in the morning of the 17th, our tent was blown over completely, and we were left exposed in our beds to a keen blast, and obliged to rise, clothe ourselves, and get the tent up again. At eight o'clock, a.m. on the 18th (more than an hour after sunrise), the thermometer suspended on a bush near the tent, stood at 51° only, and at half-past seven on the morning of the 19th at 42°! a cold felt to be very penetrating after the great heat which often prevailed during the day; but the excessive dryness of the air in the desert prevented any injurious effects resulting from these great and often sudden changes of temperature. On the 21st our progress was delayed for some hours by an accident to our servant Ameen, who was stung in the hand by one of the great yellow African scorpions, that had been brought to me by one of the camel drivers. Ameen, foolishly relying on a supposed immunity from the venomous effects of these and other noxious animals, which he believed had been communicated to him by a serpent charmer at Cairo for a consideration of eleven piastres, actually grasped the scorpion with his bare hand, and it instantly struck him at the root of the second finger of the left hand. He suffered intense pain for a few hours, with a feeling of great coldness all over,



numbness on the left side of the body, indistinct vision, sickness, and other constitutional symptoms of rather an alarming nature. I had none of the proper remedies with me for scorpion stings, such as ammonia, and ipecacuanha; but applied laudanum to the wound, and brandy internally; the next day the symptoms had quite subsided, and Ameen felt well able to continue the journey. The scorpion was one of the largest I had ever seen, and was about five inches in length to the end of the tail.

On the 27th we encamped on the fine island of Argo, the largest of those formed by the Nile, being thirty miles in length. The mirage was very strong on the desert this day. On the 31st we arrived at Ourdi or New Dongola, a miserable collection of mud built hovels, one of which we occupied during our stay. The air we found excessively cold at night, and till eight or nine o'clock in the morning frequently making us shiver even in the sun. I forgot to mention that when in Argo island, we visited the two remarkable colossal Egyptian statues, supposed to be those of Osiris and his wife Isis, with their son Horus. They are about twenty-two feet in length, of the red granite of Syene (Assouan) in Upper Egypt, which is not found near this place. Both statues have been thrown down, and one broken asunder in its fall; and it is remarkable that not the smallest trace exists of any temple to which they might have belonged.

We left Dongola on the 3rd February for Meroweh, near the ancient Napata, the supposed capital of Ethiopia in the time of Queen Candace, the ruins of which still exist close beneath the fine mountain of Gebel Berkel; in the craggy face of which, is a rock temple covered with hieroglyphics, and finely sculptured

figures. On one side of the mountain stand a number of stone pyramids, and a few miles further are those of Neuri, of both which I shall give an account presently.

From Ourdeh, (New Dongola) to Korti, we took a boat on the Nile, a wretched craft, full of dust and dirt, happily free from vermin, but of the roughest possible construction, and extremely incommodious: the remainder of the journey was performed on camels, across the desert to the opposite bend of the river at Abou Doun El Haweshab, a very prettily situated village, nearly facing the now almost deserted town of Merowah, and which we reached on the 17th; taking up as usual our quarters in the place, by dispossessing some one of his house without ceremony, the rent of which was handsomely paid for at one piastre per diem, or rather more than two-pence. The same morning, my camel becoming suddenly ungovernable set off without the slightest warning at full gallop, throwing myself off first, and then the saddle with the articles attached to it, gun, water skin, carpet bag, &c. Luckily that part of the desert was of a soft and sandy, not as in many places, of a stony rocky character, or my fall might have been as serious as it was in reality matter for jocular remark from my two companions and the Arabs. The great height of a camel's back renders a fall in such a case more dangerous than from a horse, but the generally slow staid demeanour of these most odious and disgusting of all domesticated animals, causes a similar occurrence to that which befel myself to be much rarer than on horseback. I must say however, that much as I dislike the animal for its manners and disagreeable qualities, and the negative nature of the few good ones it possesses, that I have found camel riding to be infinitely better than I expected after the

first day or two; the fatigue is almost nothing of a day's journey of from eight to ten hours, the pace is very easy, enabling you to compose yourself to a reverie as you traverse the burning track of white, yellow, or red sand, or the glowing rugged rocks under a cloudless sky, hour after hour, with little feeling of weariness; whilst from your lofty seat on the camel's hump, you constantly enjoy a good view of the country you are passing over at the ordinary pace of from two and a half to three miles an hour. At Abou Doun El Haweshab, we engaged donkeys early on the morning of February 18th to convey us to the Pyramids of Neuri (so called from a neighbouring village of that name), the more distant of the two groups from Meroweh, or about five miles from that deserted town. These Pyramids stand like their more renowned fellows near Cairo, on the verge of a desert, amid drift sand, and heaps of rubbish, but no tombs. They are very numerous, placed without the smallest attention to order or arrangement, many are still so far entire that their outline is preserved, and like those at Memphis they appear whole at a distance, but on a nearer inspection, they will be found equally disjointed and dilapidated. These Pyramids and those of Napata or Gebel Berkel, are exactly of the same form and dimensions: I can guess that they are on an average about forty feet high, and their angles of inclination are much more acute than those of the Egyptian structures of the same kind; like them, those of Neuri, have, now at least, no casing. The stone they are built of is of two or three kinds, a white and extremely soft limestone, similar to that of the great Pyramids of Geezeh, and one or two species of red or yellow conglomerate, of the coarsest, and most crumbling description that can be conceived. As the

country here is within the limits of the periodical tropical rains, it is surprising how these Pyramids can have so long resisted the influence of the weather, made as they are of such perishable stone. On the 19th, we set out on donkey back for the ancient supposed site of Napata and the Pyramids adjacent, usually known as those of Gebel Berkel, from the fine rock or mountain of that name, under which both are situated. The ruins of Napata are not extensive, but the remains of several buildings still exist above ground, and what is singular, some slender columns are yet erect, and tolerably perfect, whilst every other part of the ruin is thrown down. In the face of the mountain is a rock temple, with some of the best designed and executed sculptures and hieroglyphics I have seen in Egypt, and the capitals of the columns are very tastefully designed in a style quite different from any pattern I ever saw before. We observed one or two finely polished blocks of grey or blue granite with sculptured cornices, (perhaps sarcophagi), but nothing else of note amongst the ruins. The weather to-day and yesterday, was remarkably cold, with very high east wind, and clouds of sand from the desert. We observed the names of one or two English travellers on the walls of this remote and beautiful rock-temple, which faces the ruins of the ancient city, of which no doubt, it formed one of the most considerable edifices. The Pyramids stand on the desert, about three quarters of a mile from the ruins, and are thirteen in number; eight are merely crumbling masses of stone; the remaining five are generally speaking, in a wonderful state of preservation, almost as entire as when first erected. Their average height, as we found by measurement, is about forty-two feet, they are all built in steps, but the stones are not above thirteen inches thick, and it



was by counting the number of courses, that we were enabled to ascertain the height of the whole structure. The angles are very neatly finished with quoins of whiter stone than the rest of the building, but the apex of each Pyramid is gone. The acuteness of the angle of inclination was such, that I could not venture to mount the courses, (as I easily did those of the Pyramids of Cheops) without a feeling of giddiness soon coming on; but my sailor friends achieved the ascent without difficulty, and carved their names on the flat top of one of the principal and most perfect. These Pyramids, like those of Neuri, stand grouped without arrangement, contiguous to, and at all angles to each other, and each Pyramid has a stone porch, adorned with sculpture and hieroglyphics: sometimes the roof or ceiling of the porch is painted in colours, still in very tolerable preservation, but evincing a rude state of the art; some of the sculpture is extremely well executed, and very curious as to subject and design. We found very few memorials of European travellers upon these Pyramids, so we held ourselves excused in gratifying the national predilection for this way of acquiring immortality, by carving our names enclosed in an oval or *cartouche*, and each name again separately on different Pyramids. Mine, I cut at full length, and in large Roman letters, with month and year, inside one of the porches, the roof of which was badly painted with lotus wreaths, just over the name of Prince Puckler Muskau, who has left no memorial of the date of his visit. In one Pyramid only, did we find any entrance from the porch, all the rest were closed with blocks of stone: in the exceptional case, the opening led only to an irregular cavity, as if purposely broken up in search of a sepulchral chamber; but the penetrated Pyramids,



here and at Neuri, appear to shew that they were all constructed solidly from the first, the centre being filled with loose stones or rubble. On our return to our hovel at Al Dour, through beautiful fields of ripe, and ripening, as well as springing barley and wheat, we visited the now nearly deserted town of Meroweh. There is a work entitled "Hoskin's Travels in Ethiopia," which is highly spoken of by Sir Gardner Wilkinson; in this book there is doubtless a full account of every object of interest along the route we have taken from Wady Halfeh to Khartoun, and as such, it would be worth your while enquiring for, or ordering it for the Club.

*February 20th.* Left Al Doun El Hawasheb on camels, across the desert for Metummeh, a large straggling place a few miles above Shendy, but on the opposite side of the river, and to which, since the destruction of the former place by the troops of Mohammed Bey Deftender, in revenge for the murder, by the chief of the province, of the youngest son of Mehemet Ali in 1822, the trade of Shendy has been transferred. The Wadys, or little valleys between the hills in this desert, contain many trees and thickets, and there is good water at intervals, but we were forced at first to put up with that from a deep stagnant reservoir of natural formation in a rocky bason supplied by the periodical rains, and which now emitted a putrid smell, and was filled with various impurities. The next day, we gladly changed it for spring water, at a group of wells to which all the neighbouring tribes resort to water their flocks at stated intervals. The heat in crossing this desert was very considerable, but the nights were always deliciously cool, and indeed unpleasantly so at day-break, and for some time afterwards, but the air on the desert is so

perfectly dry, that we slept every night under the canopy of stars, often with a cold and high wind blowing on our beds, and even on our persons, without the slightest ill effect.

The following are the temperatures, as taken by my pocket thermometer:—

1851.	Shade.	Sun.	Time.
Feb. 24th, desert between Meroweh & Shendy.	87° ..	114° on hot sand.	11 30 a.m.
„ 27th, „ „	95° ..	126° „	1 20 p.m.
Mar. 1st, Metummeh, in the tent .. ..	98° ..	137° on dry earth.	2 0 „
„ 2nd, „ „	101° ..	146° „	noon.
„ 2nd, „ „	106° ..	142° „	2 0 p.m.
„ 4th, in a hut, at Koornar .. ..	102° ..	„ ..	noon.
„ 4th, „ „	102° ..	152° ..	2 0 p.m.

Although these temperatures exceeded any to which I had been hitherto exposed, and on the 2nd and 5th of March the air and earth glowed like a furnace, with a stifling hot S.E. wind, I felt not the slightest inconvenience, and hardly any discomfort when seated on my camel in the full rays of the sun. My companions felt the heat a little, but thank God, we continued all well, and even at our mid-day's haltings enjoyed our dinner with the thermometer at, or above 100° in our tent under an acacia, (or when at a village), in some deserted mud hovel, which last are always extremely cool, owing to the great thickness of the walls.

On the 28th we arrived at Metummeh, having traversed the distance from Meroweh (160 miles) in nine days. This is a great straggling town or collection of wretched hovels of mud and crude brick, like all other towns in Soudan: we encamped near the river side at some little distance from the place. The Nile, though now so low, and consequently so contracted in its channel is still a noble stream, bearing freshness and verdure wherever it meanders, hence the temperature

along its banks is always cooler than that of the adjoining country, and accustomed as we have been for weeks past to a continued high temperature, that which we enjoy on the river, or in its vicinity, feels quite moderate and agreeable; the general range of the thermometer at noon, and at 2 p.m. being from 85° to 92°, but at this moment, the air is particularly cool from the continuance of strong northerly winds, which are daily expected to cease, when very hot weather will surely succeed. We left Metummeh on the third day from our arrival for this place (Khartoun) where we have been ever since; but shall start in a day or two by boat for Shendy, Berber, and Abou Hamel, visiting on our way the pyramids of Assuer near the site of the ancient Meroe. At Berber we again engage camels for Abou Hamel, from whence we take our way across a tree-less, herb-less, and in part water-less desert, to Korosko, where our little bark has for nearly three months been awaiting our return to Cairo.

We were most civilly and kindly received by the chief people both Franks and Turks at this place, and most courteously and affably by the governor of the vast province of Khartoun, Latif Pasha, to whom we were introduced, and from whom we received a government order for camels at Berber. The manners and customs of this strange, wild, out of the way corner of the world, are so entirely different from our own, that it would require much more time and space than I can spare to give even a sketch of our numerous and often droll adventures; besides this, the reed pens are the most unfit of all instruments for voluminous communications, I must therefore reserve my account of our proceedings amongst Arabs and Turks for a verbal narrative of foreign travel.

Owing to the continuance of strong northerly winds, and to the situation of the place between two broad rivers, the temperature of Khartoun continues to be very moderate for the advancing season, it being usually about  $90^{\circ}$ — $92^{\circ}$  in the house at mid-day; the evenings and mornings, especially the latter, extremely fresh and cool, quite like summer mornings in England.

I quite forgot to mention in its proper place, that on our way from Méroweh to Metummeh we visited, at a spot called Gebal ab Gazal, or the mountain of the gazelles, one of those ancient Christian temples of which in early times there were so many in Ethiopia. It is now in ruins, but a great part of the walls are standing, and the cross nave and chancel, are still perfectly distinguishable as in our modern churches, whilst the frequent occurrence of the cross sculptured on the walls betokens the Christian character of the edifice.

We all look forward to getting back to Cairo, about the middle, or towards the end of May; sooner it is not probable we should arrive there, as we shall have still to visit some objects of interest at Thebes, the Memnonium, Medinet Habou, the tombs of the kings, the two Colossi in the Nile, and to take a second and parting look at Denderah, Luxor, and Darfour, which we left till our return northwards; besides which, we propose a ride for a couple of days into the Fayoum, a singular district, being an oasis in the desert, a little to the south of Cairo, and remarkable for the manners and customs of the people who are mostly Copts.

When you write to H. tell him that he would find abundant amusement in Soudan (Ethiopia Proper) amongst the innumerable multitude of birds that inhabit this region, and the whole valley of the Nile; the number of individuals is perfectly astonishing, and the



species themselves numerous. Birds of prey abound as in Egypt, hawks, kites, eagles, vultures, are ever seen in the air; the multitude of aquatic fowl is incredible, geese, herons, storks, cranes, spoonbills, ibises, pelicans actually swarm, and fill the air with their myriads. Every grove resounds with the cooing of doves, of which we have killed five or six different species between Cairo and Khartoun, the species changing with the latitude. Many European genera are amongst the commonest of those inhabiting this country. Wag-tails, white throats, larks, plovers, and sparrows are seen everywhere; in many cases apparently identical with our English species; as for instance, the sky lark, common plover, or lap-wing, and perhaps the ordinary sparrow of the country, which comes exceedingly close to our common house sparrow, if it be not the very same bird; being equally domestic and familiar, and even more plentiful than in Europe. In the thickets and groves along the Nile, and which here and there adorn even the desert, various richly decorated tropical birds are met with, but the ornithology of this part of Africa, like its botany, has a plain, unadorned character, partaking throughout of that found to prevail in the temperate zone. I have already collected a considerable number of the plants of Soudan, Nubia, and Upper Egypt, and all the seeds I can find for the Kew Gardens, together with every interesting vegetable product for the Museum which Sir William Hooker is now forming there; but collecting in this country is attended with considerable trouble and difficulty, on account of the want of quick and ready communication between places, and the wretched means of transport on camel's backs, which spoil, and wear out everything. The few clothes we took with us from the boat at Wady Halfeh, are in



a sadly dilapidated condition, and those which I put in my carpet bag are in tatters, the linen is far too fine, and delicate for such rough travelling as we are now performing in barbarous Africa. Your little housewife has been in constant requisition amongst our party, and our servants, one or two of whom are tolerably expert at their needle, i.e. can darn, patch, and coarsely hem, or sew on buttons, but nothing more: my two sailor companions, can of course, do a little in the way of tailoring and needlework, but ironing and mangling, are processes unknown in this country, and our linen is therefore got up in the roughest possible style. And now, dear E. fare thee well—I shall write again as soon as possible, and send this by the government post or courier, to anticipate my arrival in Cairo, which I hope (Inshallah!) will be in about six weeks time, or two months at farthest. I long to reach Ernout, (the ancient Hermanthis) in Uppèr Egypt, that I may have tidings of you from Mr. Fox.

With my kind regards to all my friends at Ryde and elsewhere.

\* \* \* \*

Always your affectionate Brother,

ABOU HASHEESH.\*

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(Letter XIV.)

My dear E——

WE started from Wady Halfeh ill supplied with the requisites for so long a journey as we actually made:

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\* Father of Grass—name given to W. A. B. by the Arabs.

our original intention not being to proceed further than New Dongola; but the remains of antiquity at Neuri, Gebel Berkel, and ancient Meroe, with a wish to ascend the Nile as high, or even higher than the junction of the main stream with the White and Blue rivers, enticed us onwards till our stores failed us, or became too scanty to be used every day. In many districts we had great difficulty in obtaining our usual supply of goats' milk; and the heat soon turned it sour, if we attempted to keep it for our usual morning and evening meal of rice-milk: failing in this, we were thrown upon black coffee, and bread indescribably hard, stale, bitter, and dirty. The extreme poverty and destitution of the peasantry made it utterly impossible to get a piece of even three or four piastres changed to pay for the little milk they had to spare us for money, and even in the towns and large villages, small coin for a Turkish dollar of twenty piastres (about three shillings and sixpence), was rarely to be had. The coinage of this unhappy country is in so debased, depreciated, and complicated a state, that the people scrutinize all money offered to them with the utmost care, and should it prove, as it often does, of a denomination, the exact value of which they do not understand, they will absolutely refuse to take it in payment. This happened so frequently in Nubia and Ethiopia, (where scarcely any coin passes among the poorer classes, who most of them transact their bargains by barter), that money was scarcely of any service to us, even where, as was not often the case, we were possessed of change in the smallest denomination i.e. the para or fuddah, forty of which make a piastre. We were daily exposed to the most vexatious squabbles with the inhabitants of both town and country, as well as with our camel drivers, on the subject of the real or

present value of the money we gave them in purchase for goods and for service.

By far the greater part of the entire distance from Wady Halfeh to Korosko was performed on camels, by which mode of conveyance we travelled nearly one thousand miles, pitching our tent when in the desert, and sleeping in it whilst the cold nights lasted; but when at a town or village, we either took up our abode in what was called by courtesy, a house, or bivouacked under the open canopy of heaven in the street, and no mode of sleeping was more pleasant to us than to have our pallet bedsteads thus set out in some open space, and lie gazing on the stars overhead till we fell asleep, which we were never long in doing. The village dogs always shewed much more curiosity at our Frank encampment than the human inhabitants; and although our things were lying about in all directions, linen, carpet bags, kitchen utensils, &c., and not one amongst us ever remained awake to keep watch, or dreamed of such a thing, not the smallest article was ever missing. One day, close to the great town of Metumme, our Arab servants, whilst they went to amuse themselves in the town, most unwarrantably left the tent pitched by the river, without a single person to look after the property. I happened to return, and found our camp thus deserted, but nothing had been touched.

I must however, do our servants the justice to say, that excepting their Arab faults of occasional carelessness and supineness, their conduct has been uniformly most praiseworthy, and we may consider ourselves as extremely fortunate in having people so honest, and, in the main, trustworthy, about us. Our cook, Said Ibrahim, is an Egyptian Copt of the neighbourhood of Siout, a very honest, industrious, good tempered, and singular

to say, very cleanly fellow; altogether, from these qualities, and his professional skill, he has been invaluable to us, and he will accompany me I hope into Syria as a servant, where his knowledge of the country, and the language, and his being a Christian, will be so many advantages. Mohammed, a youth of about sixteen, and Achmed, a young man of about twenty-five, who took his brother's place at Ourdeh (New Dongola), as Mr. Lakes' attendant, are both Mahometans of the Berber country—the former, a well-disposed, honest, tractable, and intelligent lad, of much originality of character; Achmed, a grave, sedate, and (for an Arab), careful person, who can speak a little English and Italian, but I do not like him quite so well as his less accomplished brother Ameen, who remained behind at Ourdeh at the wish of an aged mother who could not bear to have both her sons away at the same time. Achmed seems to think he shall find his brother Hamed Saafee (the keeper of the hippopotamus in London), at Cairo on our return; but I consider it unlikely that he would quit his situation till the Great Exhibition which will draw over so many sight-seeing foreigners to England, is over in October: for he makes a great deal of money, his brother says, by *douceurs* received from visitors to the gardens. Talking of hippopotami, we saw several when in the upper country above Berber, and in the White river, and could sometimes hear them blowing in the water at night: we never saw them on land, and could only see their broad truncated snouts, and part of their huge heads occasionally raised above the surface. They are not at the present day to be found below Berber.

As to crocodiles, Mr. Lakes, an excellent shot with his rifle, killed at least three of these monsters on the



sand-banks, but never could secure their bodies, as on being mortally wounded, they always contrive to flounder into the water, where they either sink dead, the body not rising till after, at least, twenty-four hours when decomposition has begun, or they come on shore after some time to die. The crocodile is a very timid animal, and I firmly believe rarely, *if ever*, ventures to attack an adult, and then only in the water, *never* on land; but there is no doubt that they will seize children who venture into shallow water where they abound: an instance of a little girl having met with such a fate occurred at a village on our southern route, the very day before our arrival. The Arabs along the Nile never evince the least fear of crocodiles; the boatmen are constantly paddling about in the water to shove their boats off the innumerable sand-banks that obstruct the navigation in all parts of this immensely long river; and I have seen large birds strutting about almost within a foot or two of their huge jaws as they lie basking on the banks, a dozen or more together, and have even seen them perch on the top of the crocodiles' heads. The real danger to a man, should he be able to approach so wary an animal near enough to receive injury (which could happen only in the case of one disabled by a wound), would be from a stroke of his powerful tail. Their mode of gliding into the water when disturbed, is by a slow motion like that of some gigantic serpent or fish; they then look very slippery, and as if all joints and suppleness.

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Always, my dear E——.,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.



(Letter XV.)

ON BOARD THE NILE BOAT MARY VICTORIA,  
Between Korosko and Assouan,

*April 27th, 1851.*

My dear E——

BEHOLD me once more on board our snug little boat gliding down the mighty stream towards Cairo, which we hope to reach about the last week of the now approaching month of May. Mr. Pengelly and myself arrived at Korosko on the evening of the 24th, after an absence from the boat of ninety-nine days, since the 16th of January, when we quitted it at Wady Halfeh for New Dongola (Ourdeh) by camels. These hundred days have been full of incident; of much pleasure mingled with much inconvenience; and sometimes with much discomfort from the dirt, dust, heat, cold, bad lodging, and worse diet, which it was our lot to put up with at various times. Still these would have been light and transient evils, worthy only of being forgotten as soon as passed,—and indeed they mostly served as subjects for merriment to us at the moment,—but it pleased the Almighty to throw a deep gloom over the latter part of our Ethiopian journey, by removing one of our little party of three by death. Our young friend and fellow-traveller, Mr. Lakes, died at Berber on the 6th of this month, after an illness of ten days, caused by a malignant eruptive fever of the country, called Jiddereh or

Jeddereh, and very analogous in its symptoms to the small pox. At Khartoun we occupied the house of the inspecting surgeon to the troops there, M. Pennay, then absent on a professional visit to Kordafan; and in a part of the premises adjacent to those we inhabited, was a black man in the worst stage of this most loathsome malady, whom, however, we left on the 21st of March, on quitting Khartoun, far advanced towards recovery, and quite out of danger. This man was all we saw, and there can be little doubt, that from him poor Mr. Lakes caught the infection.

The passage from Khartoun to Berber was made in a boat of the country, an ill-built, leaky, confined craft, *literally swarming* with rats, cockroaches, and bugs, the former two running over our beds at night, they being only formed by our mattresses spread on the floor of the cabin, which was merely large enough to contain two of the party, the third being obliged to sleep outside. The cabin just sufficiently high to sit upright in, and with a narrow space of about a foot between the beds, was covered with dirt of all kinds. To add to our discomfort, the strong north wind blowing in through the crazy panelling, deposited a thick layer of drift sand from the contiguous desert, on our clothes, beds, and other baggage, and which it was impossible to prevent mingling with our food whilst being dressed, and afterwards when served up on the dirty floor between the mattresses. By night, the wind blew in upon us cold and furious, without our having any means of excluding it; and our crew of Ethiopians stunned us whilst at their oars with their barbarous, vociferous, and monotonous chanting, sometimes for half the night together; but it is not well to interdict this amusement, as they cease to pull with energy, if not allowed to sing

while rowing. We repassed Metummeh, inspected Shendy, and on the 27th visited the highly curious and interesting pyramids and site of ancient Meroe, a day's sail below Shendy. Many of these pyramids are in admirable preservation; their number is immense, and their porches are adorned with well wrought sculptures and hieroglyphics. Very few Europeans, comparatively, have viewed these curious monuments (commonly known now as the pyramids of Assour from a village in their vicinity), as well as those of Neuri, and Gebel Berkel Napata near Merouwah.

Up to this date (*March 27th*) Mr. Lakes appeared in his usual state of health, which had been improving since we left Cairo, but on the 28th he felt very unwell, and expressed his fear to me that he was about to have an attack of fever: I gave him the only medicines I had at hand, proper for such a complaint, some castor-oil which I bought at Cairo, and a dose of Dover's powder on going to bed. The numerous discomforts I have just mentioned must have greatly aggravated his complaints: but he bore them with the most exemplary patience till we arrived at Berber on the 1st of *April*, when he was too ill to walk or ride into the town from the boat, and was of necessity carried on one of our travelling pallet bedsteads or *Ungereels* to our lodgings. In this wretched town of Berber there is but a single European resident, a worthy Frenchman, M. Lafargue, who carries on the usual commerce of the country in gum, ivory, ebony, &c. Mr. Pengelly and myself immediately waited on this gentleman, and stating our distressing condition, he at once reported our arrival to the no less worthy Turkish Governor, who instantly ordered one of the most airy and commodious houses in the place to be got ready for us, and into which poor

Mr. Lakes was forthwith removed from the rats and vermin of the boat, already covered from head to foot with an eruption like the small-pox, and which speedily assumed the appearance of that which we had seen on the black man at Khartoun, but still fuller, and far more confluent. Had Mr. Lakes not assured me that he had been vaccinated, I should have supposed that he laboured under small-pox in its most malignant shape, but I never saw even in that disease, an eruption so frightful.

I was sorely puzzled how to act, without any medicine but castor-oil, and a little compound powder of Ipecacuanha. M. Lafargue was no doctor, but assisted me with the means of administering castor-oil. I allowed Mr. Lakes nothing but a little barley-water, and endeavoured to keep him as cool as possible in a room the temperature of which was but little below 100°, and out of doors, still higher. Strange to say, with so confluent an eruption, there was not one urgent or alarming symptom, the pulse was strong to the last, and the fever very moderate, the head not at all affected till within a few hours of his death. In this way he went on for eight days, and as I hoped even improving, notwithstanding the intense heat of the weather (which the absolute want of the commonest conveniences of life in this barbarous and poverty stricken land, made it impossible to mitigate), and the tormenting swarms of flies which it required instant attention to drive away from his face and arms.

At this time we received a visit from a native Arab doctor, employed as medical inspector of the few wretched troops in garrison here, at Shendy, and other places in the provinces; who stated that he called in consequence of the reports he had received of a



European being ill at Berber, and to offer his services if acceptable. As this man had studied medicine in Egypt under the celebrated Clot Bey, I consented, after consulting with Mr. Pengelly and M. Lafargue, to let him see Mr. Lakes; when he instantly pronounced his case to be Jeddereh in a worse form than he had ever met with in any native subject; indeed our poor young friend presented a spectacle truly distressing, scarcely a feature in his mild and rather handsome countenance being recognisable. In this perplexing state of things, we all agreed that it would be advisable to leave the management of an unknown disease in the hands of a native practitioner who held a position of trust and responsibility. This man's treatment was confined to the application of a large bread poultice to the stomach, and simply administering elder or orange-flower water, keeping the patient as before on barley-water; but, instead of allowing the access of as much fresh and cool air as the weather and imperfect ventilation would admit of, he ordered Mr. Lakes to be enclosed under mosquito curtains,—alleging, on my venturing to hint the expediency of a cooler regimen, that it was the invariable custom in this complaint to keep the patient warm, because, as I understood him to say, free exposure to so dry an air as that of Africa, tended to repel the eruption: he pronounced his patient to be going on *taib keteer* (very well), and said that the crisis usually took place on the tenth day from the first symptoms appearing.

On the 6th, Mr. Lakes seemed, if not improved, at least not at all worse, excepting that I perceived a slight confusion, or rather slowness in his answers, which I attributed to exhaustion from heat and want of nourishment; his pulse was still strong, and he actually



got off his close confined couch, and walked into our room with his pillow under his arm at a steady pace, intending to seek for coolness on our pallet bedstead; the fever was moderate, but his face swollen and disfigured. We persuaded him easily to return to his bed: the doctor called early in the forenoon, gave a favourable opinion, and said that he should return in an hour, which he never did. Soon afterwards, Mr. Lakes fell into a quiet sleep, from which, being in hourly expectation of the doctor's return, we did not of course wish him to wake; the latter however not making his appearance even till long past noon, and Mr. Lakes continuing unusually quiet, I went to his bedside to see if he were awake, or wanted anything. Something, I hardly know why, misgave me, as I lifted the mosquito curtains, and perceived he was gone. Mr. Lakes was only twenty-one years of age, of a most mild, placid disposition, and during the whole of his illness not a single complaint escaped his lips; suffering as he must have done from the intense heat, and the privations of a barbarous country, in which nothing like European comforts could be procured. His remains were interred the same evening, by the permission of the few Coptic Christians resident in Berber, in their cemetery on the desert, a short mile out of the town; the grave was lined and roughly vaulted with crude bricks, set with mud instead of mortar. The body was simply wrapped in folds of new calico; for had the weather allowed time for making a coffin, the place could not have afforded wood for its construction, and a workman would have required several days to get it finished after having procured the wood and nails; so slothful are the people, and so destitute of even the commonest tools and materials of civilized society, in this degenerated country.

The Copts are usually held to be an exceedingly bigoted sect, proudly intolerant of all other Christian denominations; and therefore their liberality in freely permitting a member of a widely different church to lie in their own consecrated ground, we felt very gratefully; their example might be imitated with advantage by many much nearer home. These worthy Copts even themselves assisted as bearers in carrying poor Mr. Lakes to his last earthly resting place; and our Moslem attendants and acquaintances shewed no religious antipathy in their visits of condolence, or by refusing to perform any little office necessitating contact with the deceased.

Nothing could exceed the kindness of Mr. Lafargue, and the liberal attentions of the amiable and enlightened Turkish governor, Ali Hasseab Bey, who sent us his own private bath, and twice supplied us with Castor oil, for which he was obliged to send a janissary to search the town. In countenance, address, and suavity of deportment, he would have passed as a perfect gentleman at any European court; he invited us, (Mr. Pengelly and myself), to dine with him the day after our arrival *à la Turc*, and although he spoke but very little French, and still less Italian, I could perceive that he was a man of superior mind.

I may here remark that since leaving Wady Halfeh, French has been of immense use to me, as we have been thrown almost entirely into the society of foreigners, the few Europeans we have met having been either French, Italians, or Greeks. I am glad to say that very few indeed of our own countrymen are to be found engaged in the business of merchant adventurers, most of whom are slave dealers, besides their other occupations, and renegadoes who have abjured the habits, and thrown

off the claims of their native country, adopting the demi-civilization of the higher class of the land of their continued sojourn, for trading purposes. One such however, there is, who divides his time between Khartoun and Kordofan, Mr. Petherick : he has been made British consular agent at the former place. The few fellow countrymen we have seen in business have been chiefly in Egypt, plain, respectable men, holding stationary offices in the pay of the Pasha as superintendents of gardens, public or private works, &c. Mr. Trail, for instance, and Mr. Fox of Ernout, and Mr. Rainsford of Rhoda.

The little society to be found at Khartoun consists entirely of the few merchant adventurers settled there, (and who are always on the move backwards and forwards to and from Cairo, Kordofan, Fay, &c.), with the Turkish authorities, Military officers, &c. of the place. The Europeans fall in completely with the semi-civilized life of the Turks, and a detestable, demoralized state of society is the result, as dull and unintellectual as can be conceived ; everything below this small select circle, such as it is, is utter barbarism, destitution, or oppression. No lady has been visible in any house we have entered since leaving Egypt, all the Europeans are understood to have their harem ; and to enquire after the lady of the house would be considered a great breach of decorum, supposing, as is sometimes the case, any woman entitled to that distinction on strictly connubial grounds, to be really at the head of the household. I should however be most ungrateful to our temporary friends at Khartoun were I to omit acknowledging their uniform hospitality, and desire to make our stay amongst them agreeable by every means in their power ; and to say the truth, there was no lack of amusing incidents, and we gained an

excellent insight into Turkish ways and habits of living during our stay. I shall have a fund of odd anecdotes and adventures to amuse you with on my return.

There is something very prepossessing in the manners of the Turks of the higher class: we paid our respects severally to the governors of Ourdeh (New Dongola) Khartoun, and Berber, and found them all men of the world, polite, affable, and gentlemanly. The governor of Khartoun, Latif Pasha, received us most courteously, and gave us a government order as ruler of the province, on the governor of Berber, for camels to Abou Hamed and Korosko; yet this man, only two or three months before, murdered his own wife, and it is supposed that his conduct may be still made a subject of judicial enquiry at Constantinople, unless he can *buy* off the investigation, which no doubt he *can* do, as the salaries of such governors are enormous, and *regularly paid*, which is not the case with those of inferior functionaries. Latif Pasha appeared to us to be perfectly at his ease, and conversed in Arabic and Italian with my fellow-travellers and myself.

Poor Mr. Lakes is the second Englishman who has died within three months in this barbarous corner of the world. You must I imagine have read in the papers, or otherwise heard of the sudden death of Mr. M., a wealthy Liverpool merchant, which happened in the desert between Berber El Maghyr and Abou Hamed, in January last, about a day's journey by camels short of the latter place. Mr. M. who was considerably past sixty years of age, conceived the singular idea of making a tour from Cairo to the junction of the Blue and White rivers with his family, consisting of himself, Mrs. M. his daughter and two sons, all grown up. They pursued exactly the same route and plan as ourselves; left their



boat at Wady Halfeh with instructions to drop down the river to Korosko, there to await their return. On passing that place about the 10th or 12th of January, we saw the boat which had come from Wady Halfeh a few days before. Mr. M. seems to have travelled *en prince* throughout, with a great train of camels and servants. This family taking as I have said the same route as ourselves, by Old and New Dongola, Metummeh, Shendy, &c. visiting the pyramids of Neuri, Gebel Berkel, and Meroe (Assouan,) by the way, arrived safely on their return as far as Berber; but on traversing the desert between Berber and Abou Hamed, Mr. M. was suddenly taken ill; accounts vary as to whether it was fever, or a *coup de soleil*, probably the latter, which is said to be more prevalent during the winter than the summer months, on account of the increased excitability of the system by the vast difference of temperature between the day and night at that season; the latter being as we experienced, bitterly cold, whilst the thermometer will be at 90° or even 100° in the shade at noon the twelve hours following. Mr. M. died in six days; the head of a family, and of an extensive mercantile firm, cut off in an African desert, with his family indeed around him, but without the least medical aid at hand, and with no greater comfort than a tent could afford, or at best, a mud hovel, into which I believe he was ultimately removed; as his death took place not far from a small hamlet where we had bivouacked for the night on traversing the same ground about a fortnight before.

This part of the road is far from being pure desert, having small trees, and occasionally a few huts here and there, and the track lies near the river all the way from Berber to Abou Hamed. Mr. M's. remains were interred



beside the main (camel) track, on a spot over which a memorial of crude brick has been raised perhaps three feet above the level of the ground. The distress of his family, and their embarrassment at this sudden stroke,—left in so remote a place, with the body of a husband and a father, may be easily conceived. Nothing however could be done but to make the best of their way across the Great desert to Korosko, where we have since heard they arrived safely.

We were extremely fortunate in our passage of the Great desert between Abou Hamed and Korosko, a distance of 250 miles, which was accomplished on camels in ten days, travelling mostly by night, and resting during a great part of the day, when we spread our mattresses in some cave, or on a projecting ledge of rock, and so slept away the most sultry hours.

Our fare during this time was very scanty and in-nutritious; no meat, milk, or vegetables to be had; a little boiled rice or maccaroni, with a few dates, a kind of rusk called Baksumet, almost uneatable from its bitterness and staleness, with a cup of coffee,—such was our desert fare; our drink, water, out of filthy skins.

This desert is indeed a “great and terrible wilderness,” and every one we spoke with concerning it, gave it a bad character. We left Abou Hamed on the 15th April, and reached Korosko late on the 24th, and, though in so advanced a season, strange to say, we felt more inconvenience from the cold of the desert at night than from the heat by day. Such was the chilliness of the nights, that I have shivered under my blanket as I lay on the mattress spread on the stony and sandy ground, although wrapped in a thick pilot cloth coat; whilst we could sleep soundly under a rock by day, when the lifeless landscape of red and yellow sand, out

of which everywhere rose hills like huge heaps of half burnt coals, or molten iron, was glowing, as if actually on fire; our camels all the while lying around our bivouac, fully exposed to the sun at a temperature of 150° or more. About 2 p.m. whilst the heat was still intense, we mounted, and pursued our journey till about half-past six, then rested for about an hour, took coffee, remounted, and continued our way till 11 or 12, when we spread our mattresses on the ground and slept till 3; we then resumed our journey till sun-rise, after which we halted till 2 in the afternoon as before, for breakfast, dinner, and rest. Occasionally when circumstances called for the change, we altered these arrangements in some degree; but the above were the usual hours for rest and travelling. This desert is the very acme of lifelessness and sterility, and is strewn at intervals throughout its whole length with the skeletons of camels and even occasionally of human beings that have perished in its solitudes. The number of unfortunate animals that succumb to fatigue under their burdens is incredible. We calculated that one, two, or even three skeletons of camels occurred on an average of every fifty yards of distance. The bones remain entire, and become bleached by the sun and air to the whiteness of the finest ivory; the bodies are rapidly destroyed, not by the usual process of decomposition, but by vultures, and hyænas (of the latter we saw the tracks repeatedly), which devour the flesh and soft parts: the little they leave, together with the skin, shrivelling up quickly under the sun and parching air. We noticed one human skull, and many skeletons of oxen and horses as well as of camels.

No one who has not seen it, can form the least idea of the intensely savage features of an Ethiopian desert,

or of the fearfully awful solitude and silence which reign in it. Providentially, nearly half way across this wilderness occurs a fine rocky reservoir of the purest rain water, which the camels cannot approach near enough to defile, on account of the blocks of stone which lie around it. This water has not in the slightest degree that peculiarly unpleasant taste which distinguishes rain water in other countries, because it descends through an atmosphere perfectly free from animal or vegetable bodies; and no such substances are to be found in a state of decomposition in the natural basin at El Medinet, as the spot is called. Of course we replenished our waterskins and zemzemeers with this excellent water, which I found greatly superior to the flat insipid fluid so much praised under the name of Nile water. Our zemzemeers were a great comfort on our desert travelling from Khartoun: each of us carried one suspended from the saddle of the camel we rode. As I intend taking mine into Syria, and bringing it home to England, I shall only observe, that it is a large leathern bag, combining the forms of a bottle and of a bucket, such as you see hung up in churches and public buildings for serving fire engines. It has two mouths closed with painted wooden stoppers attached to the zemzemeer by thongs of leather; the whole being suspended by a broad strap of the same material, to any object from which you wish to hang it. The zemzemeers being of a porous kind of leather the water slowly exudes, and by the rapid absorption into the air intensely dry and heated, the water within is cooled down to a most refreshing point of refrigeration. The air of the desert has an extraordinarily vivifying influence on the human frame, which the intense heat during the day-time seems unable to counteract. It has passed almost into a

proverb, that no one ever falls sick in the desert, which, if not literally true, is in the main correct, and certainly an African desert, if only well supplied with water, would be the best, though not the most agreeable site, for a Sanitarium in the world. Even with the system lowered as it was on starting from Abou Hamed, and with little to sustain or repair it on the road, the powerful stimulus of the desert atmosphere almost took away the feeling of debility which had hung on Mr. Pengelly and myself for many weeks past, consequent on the want of the good nourishing diet we had been accustomed to in Egypt. The bread and meat in Nubia and Ethiopia, with very few and rare exceptions, were execrable: the latter, I always ate with loathing, so hard, tough, dry, and tasteless, or else so soft, flabby and strong was it, whether of goat, sheep, or ox. Poultry and eggs are not to be had much above Wady Halfeh; the Nubian eggs are remarkably small, and the poultry lean and stringy to the last degree. When in Egypt and Lower Nubia our guns furnished us with an excellent daily dinner of doves, which swarm in the date and doum groves; but as we advanced southwards, the finely flavoured Egyptian dove began to be replaced by the Debbas of the upper and southern country, a much larger, but in *flavour* far inferior species of the same bird. In the desert these failed us, but we obtained occasionally a few desert partridges, and in the Isle of Argo, the Ethiopian hare; but both these are very far inferior to the English species of the same animals, in flavour and nutritious qualities. When in the towns, we could seldom procure our accustomed meal of doves, and fish is nowhere to be had along the valley of the Nile; the occupation of fisherman is almost unknown, and old Nile's finny inhabitants, which are well noted



for their extreme insipidity, and in some cases for qualities positively injurious as food, are abandoned to the crocodiles and other river monsters.

\* \* \* \*

Ever my dear E.,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter XVI.)

Head of the first Cataract just below Philœ,  
four miles above Assouan.

My dear E——

I THANK God! we are now (April 30th) on the eve of quitting the regions of absolute savagedom for the comparative civilization of Egypt, at whose southern portal we are awaiting the safe conduct of our little bark down the cataract, which is to be accomplished, we trust, early to-morrow morning (*May 1st*). Much care and circumspection are requisite in the present extremely low state of the river, to prevent accidents from the boat striking the rocks at the bottom in her descent, and hence the sheyk of the cataract requires time to muster his hands, and make the necessary preparations.

The heat from the long continuance of northerly winds continues to be very moderate for the advanced



season, the thermometer at noon, and till two or three o'clock is usually from  $90^{\circ}$  to  $95^{\circ}$  in our cabin. At this moment whilst I am writing, it is at  $99^{\circ}$ , and our crew are stretched listlessly on deck: to myself, it is not by any means overpowering whilst I continue sitting, but somewhat too high for agreeable locomotion. The fact is, that for several weeks past, the thermometer having seldom been much under  $100^{\circ}$  in the middle of the day, and often several degrees above it, my system has become quite habituated to this high temperature, and anything under  $90^{\circ}$  feels quite cool and fresh. The hot southerly winds of May called the Khamseen, must now be looked for daily, and of course much hotter weather will be our portion,  $110^{\circ}$  to  $120^{\circ}$  in the shade.

The river has a most forlorn deserted appearance; all English tourists have long since fled its narrowed currents in dread of the summer heat, and we, the last way-worn travellers, are wending our solitary course far in the rear of the herd of winter visitors, whose ultima Thule was Wady Halfeh, or perhaps the first cataract. Even the natives gaze upon us as on a sort of unseasonable phenomenon, and we expect to look like very respectable lions on our arrival at Cairo, since we shall be the very last of the fashionable arrivals of the season: and the few stray birds of passage that may still be in the City of Victory, at this time of universal incandescence, will have no other lions to look at but ourselves.

During the earlier part of the night, the heat under our mosquito curtains is considerable, and the temperature does not lower on the water with half the rapidity with which it is radiated from the stony sandy desert, but after midnight, it becomes quite cool and pleasant, and the early mornings till nine o'clock, are delightfully

fresh still. The dry heat of this climate, too, is far less oppressive than a much lower temperature of an atmosphere holding water in solution, as India, &c. I thank God, that the heat agrees well with both of us: we have good appetites, and sleep well.

*May 3rd, Nile between Assouan and Edfou.* We are now on the broad stream of this ancient river, beyond all further danger from rocks or cataracts, with a smooth liquid, unobstructed path open to us from hence to Cairo.

On the 1st we shot the cataracts between Philæ and Assouan in a masterly style, and fortunately without accident: it was, however, a nervous business to every one on board as we darted down the boiling flood, where the least inadvertence, want of skill or presence of mind in the helmsman, must have consigned our boat to instant destruction, with great loss of life amongst those on board. The river being now extremely low, the cataract is greatly increased in rapidity, as well as shallower; and there is consequently much danger of the boat striking the rocky bottom in her headlong career, or of being dashed against the masses of rock that obstruct the channels between which the torrent rushes. As it was, she grazed the bottom in her descent, with sufficient force to render her very leaky, and I fear we shall be detained a whole day at Esneh to have her hauled up on shore and caulked, as the quantity of water she takes in causes her to sail slowly.

The thermometer is now constantly at, and above 100° for some hours in the day, and the breeze comes off the banks like a blast from an oven or furnace mouth, although still northerly, or north-easterly; what it will be when the Khamseen begins to blow from the south, as it ought now to be doing, I cannot venture to guess,

as the above is the temperature in the coolest corner of the boat that I can find for the thermometer. Great as this degree of heat is, it by no means interferes with our pursuits, reading, writing, or even going ashore, if there is anything to be seen or done there. I have been within these four hours examining the fine remains of the temple at *Kom Ombes*, in the full blaze of the sun, whose face I do not remember to have seen obscured for above a few minutes once or twice since leaving Cairo, *November 24th*.

Philæ looked more lovely and picturesque to our way-worn eyes, as we passed under her ruin-crowned banks than she did on our upward course; being the first herald of our approach to regions of comparative civilization and plenty; for our Nubian and Ethiopian trip has been somewhat trying to body as well as mind, although a great deal of enjoyment has been mingled with our anxieties and occasional personal discomfort. It is an expedition I am glad to have made, *but never wish to repeat!*

Great consternation prevails at this time along the valley of the Nile, on account of the Pasha's troops being engaged in levying the conscription by seizing men in all the towns and villages, and marching them off in chains to Cairo, &c. to recruit the army. Three or four days ago, we were witnesses of this act of despotic power, by seeing a numerous band of these unhappy peasants, who had been torn from their homes and families, on the point of being embarked on board a vessel on the Nile, for some distant part of the empire, guarded by cavalry, and tied together like dogs. The evening before, we had dispatched Mohammed and Achmed on the usual errand on shore to procure milk, when they found the place entirely deserted, the adult

male population having fled to the hills to avoid the conscription, the women and children only remaining behind.

Our gallant little bark is now turned into an asylum for the persecuted. Four men have sought refuge and protection under the British pennant, having begged a passage to Cairo to escape being taken for soldiers in their own village. Once on board a boat under a consular flag, the government cannot touch them; they are under the protection of that flag *pro tempore*, and are considered as servants in the pay and employ of the owner or traveller. These poor people work their passage to the capital by taking the oars with the rest of the men; they bring their own provisions (a little d'hourah merely), and all we give them is lodging on deck with our own people.

In my next I will give you a definite direction for future letters, as I hope to quit Egypt for Syria as soon as possible after visiting Damietta, Mansourah, Rosetta, and Suez, which will not occupy me long. I shall take Saad with me into Syria, whither I intend to proceed alone, as I shall soon find many acquaintances through my letters for Jerusalem and Bairout, and Saad is an admirable guide for the country with which he is well acquainted, as well as with many people there; besides being an excellent and faithful servant, now well tried. I propose visiting Jerusalem, Bairout, Damascus, Constantinople, and Smyrna, and to return home either by sea in the Peninsular and Oriental Company's vessels, or by the Austrian Lloyd's line to Trieste, and across the continent viâ the north of Italy, the Rhine and Belgium.

I shall do all in my power not to extend my absence beyond the middle of August, but I must be entirely



dependent on the sailing of the different steamers, and cannot therefore calculate my return with any degree of nicety.

\* \* \* \*

With kindest regards to all our friends,

Believe me,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter XVII.)

ON BOARD THE MARY VICTORIA NILE BOAT,  
Between Guineh and Girzeh, Upper Egypt,

*May 12th, 1851.*

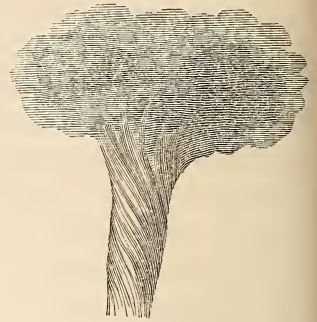
Dear E——

WE continue slowly but steadily advancing towards the Egyptian capital, having left Assouan, the most southerly frontier town of this country, on the first of this month. Our progress has been delayed by the necessary stoppages at that, and the other considerable towns along the river, for the purpose of recruiting our nearly exhausted supplies of rice, sugar, coffee, &c., as also to visit our good friends the Fox's at Ernout, and take a farewell view of Luxor, Karnac, and other lions, and finish the campaign by visiting the few that yet remained unseen by us.



The weather since leaving Assouan has not increased in heat, the wind still keeping to some northerly point, with no appearance at present of the regular and much dreaded Khamseen from the southward. It is nevertheless quite as warm as is agreeable, and rather more so during the middle of the day. By ten o'clock the thermometer has attained  $90^{\circ}$  or  $95^{\circ}$ , when it continues rising very slowly but regularly till one or two p.m. at which time it has stood from  $98^{\circ}$  to  $103^{\circ}$  for some weeks past, remaining at or near that point till four or five p.m. when the heat declines, and during the evening falls to  $90^{\circ}$  or a little lower; in the early morning the mercury has usually descended to  $84^{\circ}$  or  $85^{\circ}$ , which is now to our feelings a delightfully cool and refreshing temperature. Although the heat is not at this time of the year so great here as in the upper part of the valley of the Nile at Dongola, Berber, and especially on the desert, it is more felt in Upper Egypt than in Nubia, as the air begins though slightly, to participate in the moisture of the Mediterranean to the northward, in addition to the natural evaporation from the great river on which we are afloat; and as water does not part, by radiation, with the heat it has received from the sun during the day, at all as readily as the bare sand does, the nights on board are much hotter than on shore, where we should therefore encamp every evening for coolness, could we escape molestation from mosquitoes, and also from the dogs and natives. We have moreover exchanged the dark primitive granite rocks above Assouan, for the newer white limestone of the Theban mountains, whose bare craggy sides glow like the walls of a furnace in the fierce glare of the noontide sun, and send back the north wind in stifling puffs, causing ever and anon huge columns of sand to move in dark vortices

across the country, and towering to a vast height in the air like pillars of smoke from the crater of a volcano, their summits expanding into a cone of a pale yellow, which gradually deepens to a dark dun red or brown near the earth, according to their



position with regard to the sun. When at Philœ on the 30th of April, we experienced a strong sand-storm, which filled the air with impalpable dust mingled with coarse sand, and gave the landscape the appearance of being enveloped in fog; the sky at the same time was covered with dark angry looking clouds, from which fell a few heat drops, the utmost effort to produce anything like a refreshing shower of which this parched climate is capable; excepting at very distant intervals indeed, when a deluge of rain occasionally pours down on the Thebaid and Lower Nubia for a day or two.

When crossing the great desert of Korosko we had, on a close calm cloudy night, several vivid flashes of sheet lightning, but neither thunder nor rain accompanied these silent and innocent coruscations. I may remark that falling stars are extremely common, and remarkably large and brilliant in the clear nights of Nubia and Egypt: we saw several in our desert wanderings of startling size and splendour traverse a considerable space in the heavens with extreme velocity, and then disappear without noise.

The most serious inconvenience we experience from this torrid weather, is the great difficulty of keeping one of our staple articles of diet, milk, for a few hours, by boiling and preserving it in a vessel wrapped in wet

cloths, and placed in the coolest part of the boat. As we cannot *always* procure fresh milk at this season from the herdsmen and villagers on shore, we are often deprived of it altogether, our stock taken on board in the morning becoming unfit for use before dinner time; and the evening supply is often precarious. Our way of procuring it in the wilds of the upper country above Dongola &c., by chasing the goats to milk them when the owners were not at hand to do so for us, would amuse you in the recital.

We found our good friends Mr. and Mrs. Fox (the first English faces we have seen for months), at Ernout, quite well, and the immense sugar works belonging to Mustapha Bey, a minor, rapidly progressing towards completion: already the huge chimneys of the engine and boiling houses have risen within sight of the pylons, obelisks, and colossal pillars of Luxor and Karnac, which they far overtop in height, if they do not rival them in beauty and celebrity. This hospitable pair wished us to stop some days at the works, the machinery for which, on a scale of great magnitude, is all from England, and is erected here by native workmen from Cairo, under the sole instruction and superintendence of Mr. Fox.

I saw there one living, and several dead specimens of the terrific scorpion spider or galleode of Egypt and the adjacent countries; the latter were found drowned in a large tank for supplying the engines; the former was captured in the house by Mr. Fox. The outstretched legs of the largest specimen measured about eight inches in the span. The general aspect of this hideous animal, is that of a gigantic spider, which it resembles in the great length of its hairy legs, the oblong livid body, jointed like that of the scorpion, is destitute of any sting, instead of which the head is furnished with a

formidable pair of sharp and very prominent pincers, capable of inflicting an extremely painful, though I believe not very venomous bite. It is a nocturnal animal, frequenting out-houses, and deserted apartments, running with incredible speed, and fearlessly attacking any object that is opposed to it. Mr. Fox's Arab servant hearing a mouse squeaking in the room one night as if in distress, was induced to ascertain the cause, when he found one of these galleodes had fastened upon it, but whether with the intention of making the mouse its prey, or from accidental offence given by the latter, Mr. Fox could not say. The natives regard its bite as not dangerous, and rather encourage it, as a noted destroyer of its first cousins, the scorpions. I have several of the above specimens (including the largest) in spirits, which I hope to send home with my plants &c. from Alexandria.

We bade adieu to Ernout on the 7th May at 10 p.m. and rose at dawn the next morning to visit the ruins of Medinet Habou; the two Colossi (one of which is the famous supposed statue of Memnon); the temple, (or perhaps palace) of Rameses II. called the Memnonium; and lastly, the tombs of the kings; but the latter, we were obliged to postpone till the following day (9th) on account of the increasing morning heat after 9 or 10 o'clock.

The first of these remains, the temple of Medinet Habou, is situated near the foot of the limestone range, as are likewise the Colossi and Memnonium, all three being within half or three quarters of an hour's ride of each other. The remains of Medinet Habou, are imposing, and very extensive, but belong to different epochs; and like many other Egyptian ruins are sadly encumbered with heaps of rubbish, mounds, and paltry



hovels of crude brick, in which they are half buried, and their proportions concealed or destroyed. Although certainly possessing much grandeur, these ruins are not of a character to strike the non-antiquarian visitor as do the magnificent temples of Denderah, Esneh, Edfou, and Abou Simbal ( Ipsambul), all of which are also in a more perfect state.

The great temple-palace of Rameses II. commonly known as the Rameseum or Memnonium, must have been when entire, a magnificent structure, and even in its present shattered and razed condition, it may lay claim to that character, and is less encumbered than most of the Egyptian temples with Roman, Christian, or Arab dwellings of hideous unburnt brick. But the most remarkable object in the Memnonium, is the stupendous statue of Rameses II. the founder; unquestionably the most gigantic of ancient or modern times. This now prostrate and shattered colossus is of grey syenitic granite; I find no account of its height when entire; but Sir G. Wilkinson gives its estimated weight at 887 tons. I must say however that viewed as it now lies, the proportions of the statue convey but an indifferent idea of the artistic skill of the sculptor; to myself, it appeared a sadly coarse and clumsy piece of workmanship both in design and execution; but if originally of a single piece, as really seems to have been the case, its transportation from the very distant quarry to its temple abode, reflects great credit either on the patience, or the engineering skill of the ancient Egyptians, I do not know which; but I believe the praise should be equally awarded to both.

The two ill-shaped, stiff, and much mutilated sitting statues, one of which has acquired such world wide notoriety as the vocal Memnon, are rather objects of



wonder for their magnitude, than of admiration for their beauty ; and except that they possessed nothing of the same life and spirit, they put me greatly in mind of two figures of Tam O'Shanter and Souter John which I recollect to have seen many years ago in London, the production of the self taught Scottish artist, Thoms, who was justly admired for his talented conception of the heroes of Burns's tale. Poor Memnon, in particular, has been sadly knocked about since his singing days were over ; and has been so clumsily repaired above the waist with unshapely blocks of sandstone (which is not the material of which the rest of his person is composed), as to look more like the fragment of an old wall, than a delineation in stone of the human form divine. In the huge lap of this statue, which is only accessible, by climbing, to persons gifted with a stronger head than mine, is a stone which emits a ringing sound when struck, and behind this is a cavity in which Sir G. Wilkinson thinks a person was in the habit of concealing himself, in order to produce the sound attributed by superstitious belief to the rays of the sun impinging on the figure at his rising, or as Sir G. Wilkinson states, an hour or two afterwards. One of our donkey boys climbed into the lap, and struck the stone repeatedly ; but with all my desire to hear what I was prepared to listen to, a deep, sonorous, bell like tone, I could only distinguish a dull tinkling like that which any mason's trowel would elicit from an ordinary block of marble or freestone. The feet and throne of the so-called Memnon, (through confusion of names with the Egyptian *Miamun*), are covered with inscriptions, chiefly Greek, of great antiquity. The fellow statue is in better preservation, though of less celebrity, but the faces of both are so disfigured, that the features are scarcely traceable.

The next morning at dawn we again started for the tombs of the Kings, attended by two servants, a guide with candles, our donkey boys, and some half dozen little fellows bearing gullahs, or porous earthen bottles filled with water; to the mouths of which ever and anon, we were glad to apply our parched lips. These famous grottos are excavated in the most solitary and intricate recesses of the Theban mountains. After quitting the plain, the way leads through winding defiles between hills and rocks of white limestone, and coarse conglomerate, the former extremely white, and approaching very nearly in hardness and appearance to the indurated chalk of our own country. Not a tree, shrub, or blade of grass finds a habitation upon these bare and sunburnt mountains, on which a drop of water from heaven either as rain or dew rarely falls, save only the transient devastating floods of sub-tropical storms. Jackals, wolves, and hyenas are the inhabitants; birds are few; but Mr. Pengelly brought down at one shot, a pair of magnificent horned owls, of great size, and with most formidable beaks and talons.

The distance from our moorings on the western or Lybian side of the Nile opposite Luxor to these tombs, is about six miles. Their number is very considerable, but since their general plan, sculptures, and painting, are much the same in all, and so minute a survey could only interest the professed and zealous antiquary, we contented ourselves with viewing those marked by Sir G. Wilkinson on the face of their respective entrances Nos. 9, 11, 17, called the tombs of Memnon (Miamun Rameses V.) Bruce's or the Harper's, and Belzoni's tomb. These grottos lie scattered about in the sides of hills at irregular distances; the entrances are by unadorned rectangular openings, and the passage for some

distance is always descending, and sometimes very steep, thickly strewed with fragments of the rock, beyond which, the tombs present an extraordinary collection of passages, halls, and chambers, elaborately adorned with sculptures and paintings, in endless variety and in endless repetition.

A dispassionate view of Egyptian art, such as I have now had an opportunity of taking, in regard to its chief and most elaborate monuments, has led me to the conviction that with much that is worthy of the highest admiration, there is a vast deal that is not merely below mediocrity, but absolutely poor and paltry to the last degree, all strangely co-existing in the same edifice or excavation, and made the more conspicuous by the sharpness of the contrast. I have often been astonished and delighted by the gracefulness, elegance, and admirable execution of the sculptures in the various temples, tombs and pyramids, as at Napata and Meroe, which I have visited: and have been grieved as much to see the miserable scratches or scores intended to represent similar objects, that most frequently were to be found defacing the very walls on which such fine skill and taste were displayed. An extraordinary inequality of design and execution seems the prevailing characteristic of Egyptian sculpture and architecture. As for the paintings in the tombs, and on the roofs and ceilings of the temples, I must confess that with very few exceptions indeed, I never saw any that, to my eye, looked superior to vile daubs, such as a country-sign painter might feel ashamed to have executed. Some of the figures of men and animals in processions &c. are tolerably pourtrayed, chiefly in their peculiar subdued red, or Etruscan vase colour; but whenever they attempt flowers, fruit, foliage, a scroll, or any

complicated object required strong shading or relief, I have seen nothing but utter failure,—flat, gaudy, ungraceful designs. I know it is the fashion in England to talk of the extraordinary brilliancy and durability of these colours, as being inimitable in these degenerate days, by the loss of the mode of their preparation, one of the pretended secrets of ancient art; but this assertion, I have learnt to class with the customary ravings about Eastern skies, sunlights, shadows, moons, flowers, and fruits. I do not deny that the colours in the tombs and temples of Egypt have stood well, and retained most, if not the whole, of their original brilliancy (such as it was) through the lapse of many centuries; but I beg to observe that this holds true only in those edifices or excavations which have been hermetically sealed by the artificial closing up of the entrance, or by accumulation over them of the sands of the desert. From the more exposed buildings the painting has been either wholly effaced by the weather, or, as at Esneh and Edfou, some of the capitals of the columns retain mere traces of a disagreeable verdigris green: the dark blue studded with stars on the ceilings of some of these structures, as at Denderah, has stood better, but even that is in a great degree blotched and obscured by age, and by the damp of the river.

The Egyptians knew nothing of oil paints, and all their water colours that I have seen on the stucco or stone of their walls, whether in tombs or temples, have an opaque, earthy, or (what I believe artists call) muddy appearance, which argues no great skill or knowledge of the materials best adapted for yielding bright clear colours, similiar to those furnished by substances which modern chemistry has brought to light, and made subservient to modern art. Analysis indeed has proved



that the water colours used by the ancient Egyptians for the decoration of their temples, were obtained from substances identical with those that yield the cheapest and most ordinary hues to the house painters of modern days, as yellow and red ochre, verdigris, lamp black, &c. Our brilliant smalt, chrome yellow, Prussian blue, and other modern pigments of varied intensity, were to them unknown. Indigo, they were doubtless acquainted with; this has, I believe, been demonstrated by chemical analysis of some of their colours from the tombs and temples; several species of indigo I found abundant in the southern deserts, and along the banks of the Nile; and one native species, *Indigofera argentea*, is to this day universally used in Egypt for dyeing the common blue cloth of the country.

The effect of the colouring in the tombs of the Kings is much injured by the often tasteless disposition of the various hues in parallel lines or stripes along the walls, the interstices between the stripes being crowded with vilely daubed hieroglyphics, mixed with grotesque figures, and every monstrous combination of living forms, that a depraved ingenuity could suggest to the artist. All harmonious blending or contrast of colours seems to have been generally overlooked, or disregarded in the sepulchral decorations of the Egyptians; green, red, blue, black, and yellow, are mixed, or laid on in close contact upon the stuccoed walls and roof, with the garish brush of a painter of children's toys, rather than with the sober and chastened pencil of a genuine artist. Yet, amidst this mass of confused figures, gaudy tints, and rude designs, there is a great deal worthy of admiration in these receptacles of the royal dead, figures traced with vast freedom and grace occasionally meet the eye, which causes the more regret to see them



associated with so much that is poor and mean. The noble halls covered with sculptures and hieroglyphics, are wonderfully imposing from their fine size and proportions, as well as from the interest attaching to them on account of their high antiquity, and as depicting the manners and customs of the times in which they were constructed.

The walls of this vast Necropolis bear witness to the presence within them of the great and illustrious as well as of the little and vain of every age and clime: we read the names of most of the celebrated explorers of Egyptian antiquities, Belzoni, Irby, and Mangles, Burckhard, and if I recollect right, of Champollion, and of others of the French savans. Amongst those of the more renowned but unlettered visitors to these sepulchral chambers, we read the names of Mohammed Ali in Arabic and European characters. We were greatly amused at the very uncomplimentary remarks and addresses inscribed on the walls of the first tomb we explored (No. 17, or that of Memnon so called), to Dr. Lepsius, a celebrated living antiquary of Germany, deprecating his appropriation of choice morsels of sculpture and hieroglyphics which he had detached from the wall, and carried away on a late archæological razzia amongst these venerable remains of by-gone times. We were however indebted to this same Teutonic rifler of tombs, for our acquaintance with an exquisite little sepulchral grot, which he had the good fortune to light upon and dis-inter last year I believe, and throw open to the inspection of travellers like ourselves.

The heat within the tombs of the kings was not nearly so great as I had anticipated, and the walls and roofs had the appearance of the most parching dryness: nevertheless the paintings in the tomb we first visited

had suffered as it is said from the percolation through the absorbent limestone-rock of those violent floods which even visit the burnt-up hills of the Thebaid at distant, but uncertain periods.

On quitting the tombs of the kings, we arrived in the plain by another and shorter route, passing by a very steep path across the highest peaks of the Theban mountains, and then descending precipitously their eastern escarpment, right glad to have done so at the expence of a toilsome clamber in the now burning sun on foot as far as the summit, our donkeys following us as best they might. The view was glorious, the vast plain of Thebes on our right, mapped out with the ruins of Medinet Abou, Karnak, the Colossi, the Memnonium, &c., on the left the winding and sparkling river, on the furthest banks of which, the eye ranged over Luxor, Karnak, and the great plain beyond, bounded by a rampart of limestone like that from which we were looking down, and beholding the vast ruins reduced to the size of models under our feet. On our way down we passed the village and grottos of Assaseef, in one of which, during our occupation of its friendly shelter from the scorching sun, while we discussed a large bowl of goat's milk, I noticed some beautifully designed and finely executed sculpture, of some of which I caused impressions to be taken on coarse paper, by a native of the place who had acquired the art from Dr. Lepsius, and, for a piastre a sheet, performed the task very fairly, though on the whole rather unequally.

Towards sunset of the 9th (having crossed over and moored our bark to the shore at Luxor during the day), we started on donkeys to take a second and farewell view of the ruins at that place, and, acting on the advice given me by Mrs. H. at Assouan, to pay our visit to the

latter by moonlight. Arriving at Karnak just before the sun went down, and passing the noble, and still nearly perfect propylon that stands at the entrance to the ruins from Luxor, we mounted immediately behind that magnificent gateway to the roof of the temple which is formed by huge blocks laid across from column to column, and formerly united as in modern structures by iron clamps and lead. From this elevated position we sat enjoying a fine view of the great temple, the obelisks, and other ruins, collectively known as those of Karnak, whilst our trusty little Nubian Mohammed kindled a charcoal fire by our side, in the deep groove formed between two disjointed colossal blocks, which made an excellent grate, on which our tea kettle was merrily singing, and enabled us to continue leisurely sipping our tea, and chatting till twilight had vanished entirely from the western horizon, and had given place to that of the moon, then at the end of her first quarter, when we descended, and made the best of our way to the vast mass of ruins still in front of us. The effect on entering the grand hall, amid the forest of colossal pillars, which once supported as massive a roof, was quite what Mrs. H. had described to me—it was awfully grand, almost unearthly. The night was clear (and it is very rarely indeed otherwise in Upper Egypt), but a few fleecy clouds occasionally passed across the moon, which being only half way to the full, threw a more solemn, dusky, and delusive shadow, than if she had been shining in perfect glory. Every part of the vast pile seemed magnified, whilst all its architectural defects were effectually concealed; nothing but the gigantic outlines of the serried ranks of tower-like columns were visible, half buried in black shade, half revealed in pale uncertain light; some few, leaning towards one another, with an

alarming inclination, seemed actually to be toppling over as the few thin clouds, flying before the moon, apparently transmitted their own motion to these Titanian masses, many of which are crowned in addition to their vast capitals, with enormous blocks, which some mighty agency has strangely thrown into every imaginable position of threatening danger to such as explore this wonderful temple. Some of these architraves are actually hanging in mid air, totally unsupported except by a small part of their imbedded extremity, the unsupported end lowered to an angle, sometimes nearly approaching the perpendicular: yet this mighty weight hangs still, and doubtless has done so for ages. The two noble granite obelisks of one solid block, that still adorn Karnak, shew to admirable advantage by moonlight, and the same remark may be with truth extended to every part of the ruins, of which I would not for the world have missed taking the view by night.

The aspect of Karnak by day, I still think underserving the extravagantly high flown encomiums of antiquaries, and picturesque-hunting travellers and artists. With a vast deal that is poor, tasteless, and barbarous in design and execution, there is still very much amongst these remains to call forth feelings of admiration at their sublimity, and no one can reasonably doubt that in the days of their entirety, the general effect of this vast group of edifices must have been splendid beyond belief. I find fault only with that class of prepossessed travellers who can see *nothing but perfection* (often purely imaginary) in such ancient relics; overlooking or denying the most obvious and glaring defects, or even setting them down, as so many positive beauties.

The ruins of Karnak abound in scorpions; and a small, dirty, but picturesque village bearing the name of



the temple, occupies the space in front of the grand entrance to the ruins, but happily has not yet encroached upon any part of the latter, as is the case at Edfou and Esneh, where the miserable hovels of the *fellahs* are crowded together on the very roofs of these fanes, as if upon a solid rock. We had a pleasant ride home by moonlight to our boat at Luxor; and on arriving there, we immediately cast loose from the shore, and dropped down the river on our return voyage to Cairo.

Sun-rise on the morning of the 10th found me trotting over the halfeh-grass-covered-plain on a gallant Egyptian neddy, bent on paying my respects once more to the truly magnificent temple of Dendereh; I had only with me our late friend Mr. Lakes' Arab servant, Ahmeed. I had another object in again stopping at Dendereh, namely, to procure a cluster of the fruit of the Doum Palm for the Botanical Museum at Kew, agreeably to a request from Sir William Hooker that I would do so if possible. In this I have fully succeeded, and so, whilst the villagers were engaged in cutting me off a proper sized cluster from the forest of this palm which adorns the approach to the temple from the river, I pushed on for the latter, returning with rather increased than diminished admiration of so beautiful, and elaborately-adorned a structure. The profusion of sculptures and hieroglyphics finely executed in relief, and in vast square panels, with which the walls are absolutely covered, has an extraordinarily rich effect, greatly superior to the same sculptures and emblematic writing in intaglio. The air was delightfully cool and fresh, like that of a May morning at home, and this cool character the mornings have hitherto preserved since we left Khartoun, but the earlier part of the



nights is now sultry, although quite pleasant after two or three o'clock a.m. So rapid is the dissipation of heat by nocturnal radiation in this unclouded clime, that the languid enervated Africans are secure of a few hours before and after sun-rise of sufficiently low temperature to brace their unstrung frames, at nearly, if not at all times of the year; and in winter, the mornings are cold enough to make a European, much more a native, shiver, even far within the tropics.

*Siout, or Assiout, Upper Egypt, May 18th.* Continued northerly winds, and (so unlike their former selves), a lazy apathetic crew, whom neither threats nor persuasion can induce to pull at the oars lustily, unite to render our return voyage down the Nile, a very tedious one: we having been already eighteen days from Assouan, with a prospect before us of not being at Cairo before the end of the month at our present rate of going. We are the more desirous of reaching Cairo speedily, as my fellow traveller's health is suffering materially from the heat, and he is complaining of daily increasing languor and debility. Sir G. Wilkinson tells us that from April to October favourable winds for *ascending* the Nile are not to be expected, the prevailing ones during that season being from some southerly quarter, or in other words *down* the river. Hitherto however, the wind has constantly come from the north, and so far has fulfilled the assertion of Sir G. Wilkinson, of being *unfavourable*; but in our case, for precisely the reverse of the reason he gives, since we are on our return from, and not on our passage *to* Upper Egypt, and should in truth expect to have the wind in our favour coming down. Mr. Pengelly tells me that his former experience of the weather during summer in Egypt is in accordance with the present, that northerly winds have ever been more general than

southerly, and from the account of many persons with whom I have spoken on the subject, these would seem to preponderate greatly over breezes from other quarters throughout the year.

This northerly wind, however, has the advantage of keeping the temperature lower than a southerly one, but its breezes are still very hot, and impart no feeling of freshness as they pass over us, we therefore exclude them and the sun together, by keeping the venetian blinds of our boat shut during the middle of the day. We would gladly put up with a higher temperature in being blown merrily down to Cairo by a red hot Khamseen wind in preference to our present slow progress with a comparatively cool one perpetually against us. The temperature continues pretty steady, neither increasing nor diminishing in any material degree; and its distribution through the twenty-four hours may be thus stated. Between sunrise and eight a.m. from  $80^{\circ}$ — $85^{\circ}$ , by ten a.m. it has generally reached  $90^{\circ}$ , from which time it continues slowly rising till one or two p.m. being at noon  $98^{\circ}$ — $100^{\circ}$ , and two p.m.  $102^{\circ}$ , continuing at this point till at or near sunset, when it sinks slowly to  $90^{\circ}$  or  $92^{\circ}$ , which is the usual height of the thermometer at midnight; from this time the mercury gradually falls to between  $80^{\circ}$  and  $70^{\circ}$ , the ordinary heat just before sunrise. But some abatement of the mid-day heat both in intensity and duration, is beginning to manifest itself as we advance northwards, and, gaining a flatter and more open country, leave the narrower part of the Nile valley behind us shut in by the bare heated limestone mountains of the Thebaid, the hot blasts of which we are beginning to exchange for cool currents of air from the Mediterranean. The temperatures given above are taken on board in the cabin

with as much attention to keeping that place cool as possible. For six weeks or two months past, the thermometer has, I believe, hardly ever been below 100° at noon, sometimes several degrees above that point: but within these few days, it has not been so high until an hour or two after the sun has passed the meridian. In spite of being thus exposed during twenty out of the twenty-four hours to a heat of 90°—102°, and sleeping under close drawn mosquito curtains of fine muslin, I am perfectly well in health, and suffer no other inconvenience from the inordinate temperature than frequent thirst, and some loss of what little adipose covering I possess by nature: this is certainly not the weather for any one to grow stout in, however much disposed thereto by constitution.

*Minieh May 24th.* We arrived here yesterday afternoon, and lucky it was that we did so, as a furious gale from the northward set in after dark, and continued to blow unabatedly all night, and though at this moment reduced to a fresh breeze, the weather holds out no prospect of our getting away for many hours at least. The Nile lashed into foam, is rolling like the troubled ocean, and seems resolved to deserve its Arab appellation of El Bahr, which signifies the sea or any large body of water. The temperature to day is very cool and pleasant at this time (one p.m.); the thermometer in the strong fresh current of wind through our boat, as she lies moored under the bank in a direction north and south, is 88°; we have had nothing so low as this at the same hour by twelve or fourteen degrees for two months past, but we must not expect its continuance when the gale is over.

For the last two days the sky has been partly overcast with tolerably thick clouds, a thing rarely seen even

so low down as this town is in latitude  $28^{\circ}$ , and still seldom higher up. I cannot understand why it is the custom for English travellers to speak in such raptures of the transparent azure of the Egyptian sky, and of its unrivalled brilliancy: to my vision, it has always, excepting at particular moments, shewn itself as strikingly deficient in both these attributes. The sky of Egypt is certainly deserving enough of praise in so far as the absence of *clouds* is concerned, although it is not seldom that it is wrapped in a veil of dull, thin vapour, especially towards evening, when the sunsets are frequently extremely tame, hazy, and colourless. I have studied the phases of the African sky with great attention for eight months, and can confidently assert that brilliancy and transparency are not its habitual every day attributes. A white, milky, or whey-like opacity, is the almost constant characteristic of the heavens in the land of the Pharaohs, and thence southward into the tropical regions of Nubia and Abyssinia; becoming more and more marked, as the summer or warm season advances; the sky assuming a more diaphanous aspect in the winter, or at least in the cooler season. In general the nights are clearer than the days, and the star-light is often extremely brilliant, but not more so I am sure, than on many a fine winter's night in England; and frequently the night sky is as nebulous, or nearly so, as the day, and a dim lustreless star-light, which people at home are apt to suppose is unknown in these southern climes, is all the traveller enjoys on his nocturnal journeyings for his guidance. I might say that the sky of Egypt (including that of Nubia to the termination of the valley of the Nile at Khartoun), is but in keeping with the land and its products, over which its arch is hung; a sunlit, and sunburnt, region of colourless, or



rather *sadness*-tinted landscapes, with little contrast of light and shade; the very verdure of its scanty and monotonous *native* vegetation, greyish, and unrefreshing to the eye; the animals, birds, reptiles, and insects, seldom arrayed in any but the plainest garb, in which like that of the people themselves and their earthen habitations, some shades of brown are the prevailing hue; the uniformity of which is only broken by the occasional passage across the expanse of a few clouds too transparent and colourless to give tone and richness to the firmament. I have seen beautiful sun-sets (and on my desert travels), fine sun-rises too; but the gorgeous tints that accompany them in climates of greater humidity, are but their occasional concomitants in this arid region; and I have remarked that whilst the sun usually rises from an unclouded horizon, his setting is often obscured by a dull haze.

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Always, my dear E——,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter XVIII.)

*Minieh, May 25th, 1851.*

Dear E——

WE are still detained here close prisoners by the gale, which continues to rage furiously day and night, but is most violent at the latter time; we are assured



that it will last over to-morrow, after which we may confidently look for our release from this windy quarantine. Our situation is very unpleasant, as there is no stirring out without being blinded and half suffocated by the fine sand which fills the air like a mist; the temperature has fallen so suddenly that it is felt by us all; this morning at eight the thermometer was only 72°, now (ten a.m.) 76°, when it has always at this hour been at, or near 99°; an agreeable change enough, had it been but gradual. This morning I awoke so cold, that I was glad to draw my blanket over me, which has not been in request for weeks, I might almost say, months past. Mr. P. is far from well, and our native servants have suffered much from headache and painful indigestion for some days, affections consequent upon the unsettled atmosphere. Sir G. Wilkinson states that the present month is the most disagreeable of the whole year in Egypt, and the residents confirm his account: the heat, although less than in the succeeding three months, is said to be more oppressive, probably from a degree of moisture in the northerly winds from the Mediterranean, and the low marshy Delta over which they come hither.

A certain degree of precaution is advisable to escape ophthalmia, that terrible scourge of Egypt, and which is particularly prevalent in spring and autumn, or at low and high Nile, when the air is moister than in summer, and the variations of temperature more frequent and sudden. Weak and sore eyes are of lamentable frequency from Alexandria to Assouan; half the population at the very least, having those organs more or less affected; but as to the Arabs of the desert, although living in an intense glare, and breathing an atmosphere filled with floating sand, I do not remember to have once seen their black sparkling eyes dimmed by

the least weakness or disease. This immunity from eye complaints is no doubt justly ascribed to the marvellously invigorating or tonic influence of the desert atmosphere, absolutely void of every particle of sensible humidity; a property of which we had ample and most satisfactory experience.

The height of last year's inundation was below the wholesome average for the prosperity of the crops, I cannot add for that of the cultivators, who, whatever the season may be, reap no benefit from their labours: hence the Nile is this year unusually low, a deficiency which, the early setting-in of the heat this summer, and its protracted duration last autumn materially aggravated. This very low state of the river helps to make our downward voyage more tedious from the shoals and sand-banks we are ever getting aground upon; indeed our good friends at the sugar factories of Ernout, Rhoda, and Minieh, thought we must have passed them long since in the night, as the waters of the Nile have been cleared of English, and other European tourist-boats for many a week past. A steamer arrived here yesterday with a pasha on board, commissioned to proceed upwards and enquire into the amount of land which was left uncovered by last year's inundation, in order that such land may be exempt wholly, or in part from the annual taxes and other imposts usually levied; a *piece of justice* rather forced on government by the absolute impossibility of collecting any revenue from the lands left unwatered, than by the desire of doing right by the poor *fellahs* who toil only for the benefit of their rulers.

*Minieh, May 27th.* No prospect of stirring yet: the breeze continues as fresh as ever, blowing a gale at night; the weather still extremely cool, the ther-

mometer to-day at noon, only 78°. Mr. Pengelly continues very unwell: but in this large garrison town, the third in importance of all those above Cairo, no medicine of any kind is to be obtained, and nothing eatable in the way of animal food. A chicken for stewing, that has only this very moment succumbed to the sacrificing knife of our cook, is all we have to look to for appeasing our appetite three hours hence, a portion of this unhappy biped being reserved to make a cup full of broth for my sick friend. I do not expect to be able to touch the remainder, having hitherto seldom achieved the mastication of Egyptian fowls. As to attempting the meat any more, that is out of the question; pigeons (always wretchedly lean) are not to be had here, though they literally swarm in myriads at most Egyptian towns, and the wild doves, that so unceasingly befriended us on our upward voyage, are at this season very rare and shy. The fact we find to be, that it is only during the "*season*" for tourists going up, and coming down the river, or from October to March inclusive, that the markets of Egyptian provincial towns are decently supplied with the common necessities of life: after that season is over, nothing eatable is to be hoped for. Fine fat turkeys at fifteen to seventeen piastres the pair (two shillings and fourpence to three shillings) are procurable at Kenneh and other places above Cairo at that time. Now they are not only very scarce, but very poor and dear: we bought two of these miserable scare-crows a little above this place a few days since, which we fed with barley or dhourrah into something like tolerable condition. I fancy that neither poultry nor cattle will fatten here during the intense heat of summer, but the ill condition of both is doubtless mainly due to the apathy and

extreme poverty of the people, who scarcely themselves touch animal food, and cannot, unless there is a demand for fowls in the market, afford to give them grain, whilst at this season the always scanty pasturage for the flocks and herds, is scantier still.

In Nubia and Ethiopia goats almost wholly take the place of sheep; our chief fare there was kid, and goat's milk: but the former was always very lean and tasteless, and the latter, had not the richness, or even quite the taste of cow's milk. In the upper countries just named, the cattle are of a peculiar, probably distinct, species of ox, very much like our own, but with a hump on the back, and the females are, as milch cows, good for nothing, being always nearly dry; so that we could scarcely ever procure cows' milk even when meeting with large herds of them, much as we should have preferred it to that of goats. Our common breed or species is also seen in Nubia, &c. but more rarely. In most parts of Egypt, but especially in the lower provinces, the common and hump-backed cattle are in a great degree supplanted by the Water Buffalo (*Bos Bubalus*) a huge, grotesque, ungainly, but apparently harmless and stupid animal, to which we were indebted for some of the milk obtained in Egypt, and all the abominable mass of indigestible fibres sold for beef. The Water Buffalo has not made its way very far beyond the second cataract, or into Nubia: but it is well known, I am told in India. Its name is derived from its habit of laying a great part of its time immersed in the water of pools and rivers, and it is an excellent swimmer. Thousands may be seen on the tanks and shallows of the Nile during the heat of the day luxuriously reposing, with only their heads, or even the tips of their hippopotamus-like noses visible above the stream that is continually passing over them,



brings constantly renewed coolness with it: at times one envies them their position. Yet in the intensely hot climate of Eastern Africa, I seldom or never see other cattle avail themselves of the river either for coolness, or as a refuge from the various flies that torment them. Shade is a rarity in Egypt, and in the country to the south of it, and deep shade is unknown, from the absence of all broad leaved umbrageous trees in regions where they would seem to be most required. Under these circumstances the domesticated animals appear to be endowed with, or to have acquired by long habit, an extraordinary power of bearing heat. One sees the flocks and herds quietly reposing or chewing the cud on the hard burnt-up pasture ground, broiling in the rays of a mid-day's sun that I imagine would infallibly and quickly affect an English ox, cow, sheep, goat, horse, or donkey, with *coup de soleil*. As to the camel, he seems to bear almost an antipathy to water, and in Egypt I am told it is customary to thrash the poor donkeys when they want them to drink, a proceeding quite as original in its way as that of administering a dram to a turkey when about to be killed for the table.

*Minieh, May 28th.* The breeze continues to keep us close prisoners, and a weary time we have of it, for the country around is very uninteresting, and our anxiety to reach Cairo increases daily. A government steamer is reported to be hourly expected from Siout, when we hope to succeed in inducing the Captain to tow us up to the capital, or at least to within a few miles of Cairo, since, if Mr. Pengelly should feel equal to the task, we propose stopping opposite the pyramids of Dashoor, Abousheer, and Lake Karah, which we have not visited. His indisposition, and our untoward detention will oblige me to give up my plan of turning aside for a couple of



days into the curious district of the Fayoum, in which is situated what remains of the once extensive Lake Moëris.

We have succeeded in procuring a couple of tame rabbits to vary our scanty bill of fare, which has not received a single addition to its items since we left Assouan, notwithstanding the assurances of our cook Saad that the fat of the land of Egypt would be ours to enjoy, as soon as we reached Siout, close to which is the said Saad's native village. Our worthy *cuisinier* was piqued for the honour of his native land, and during our journey into Nubia, never failed to speak in terms of unmeasured contempt and disparagement of that country and its inhabitants, besides indulging in lamentations without end at having no materials on which to exercise his professional skill ; he vows never to accompany any English travellers who may engage his services, beyond the second cataract at Wady Halfeh ; and counsels all tourists not to advance beyond the first cataract just above Assouan, which is the boundary of Egypt, unless they wish to be starved outright. For our own parts, we have found Egypt, at this season, hardly a shade superior to Nubia in point of gastronomic advantages, having lived as luxuriously at Khartoun and Berber, as at Siout, or this town. Fish, there is none to be had, for the reason I have before stated. Of fruit, there is no variety, and what there is, is bad, either in its own nature through the climate, or from want of proper culture. A good melon, or water-melon, may now and then be procured, but is too often gathered before being sufficiently ripe, when the fruit is dangerous to indulge in. Apples and apricots are in the market, but the apples are miserably small, stunted, and greenish, being gathered before maturity, lest I imagine, they

should drop off themselves from the trees or rather bushes, that produce them, for the climate of even Lower Egypt, is too warm and dry for the fruits of the temperate zone. We tried some the other day stewed, but taste and briskness they had none. The apricots are very poor, not larger than damsons, hard, and flavourless; I have no doubt the trees are all raised from stones, and am quite certain, that no pains whatever are bestowed on their cultivation. Grapes are not yet ripe, nor does the vine appear to be much cultivated in Egypt, except in the gardens of the richer inhabitants. We saw vines in several gardens at Khartoun, in full bearing in March; the clusters were numerous enough, but the grapes in each bunch that did come to maturity, were small, and mawkishly sweet; the rest fell off, or ceased to enlarge. Sycomore figs (the fruit of the tree Sycomore of Scripture, *Ficus Sycomorus*) are now in season, which with the date, the produce of the date palm, (*Phœnix Dactylifera*) are the only native or truly indigenous fruits deserving of the name, that the soil of Egypt and Nubia produces; unless we include the common fig (*Ficus Carica*) which I have not met with *wild*, but believe to grow spontaneously in the northern deserts. The fig prospers and is abundantly grown in these countries, where the fruit is excellent, but not yet in season here: although at Khartoun, when we left that place on the 20th of March, figs were just coming to maturity. The Sycomore is the largest of Egyptain trees, and affords a deeper shade than any of the few native ones. The figs grow dispersed over the trunk and large widely spreading branches, in clusters as it were, each on a short stalk, springing directly from the old wood. The fruit, called Gimmays, much resembles the common fig in shape, but is smaller, the

flavour too is very similar,—pleasant, but much inferior to the latter, and it is chiefly eaten by the lower classes, being hawked about the streets of Cairo for their behoof. The Gimmays is very dissimilar in growth to the common fig-tree, and has somewhat the aspect of our alder, the leaves being about the same size, and at a distance not unlike those of that tree. I have some doubts whether even the Sycomore has a just claim to insertion into the scanty dendrological flora of Egypt. I have never remarked it beyond the strip of cultivation that marks the limits of the annual inundation: it is far more frequently seen in an obviously planted state about houses, as in court-yards and avenues; and when in situations *apparently* more natural, as in the open fields of grain, &c., it is commonly as a solitary specimen; nor have I ever remarked it intermixed with the groves of Acacias, Dates, or Doum-trees that adorn at intervals the valley of the Nile to its junction with the Blue and White rivers, and where, if really indigenous, one might expect to find it flourishing. It must however, if not an aboriginal, have been introduced into Egypt from time immemorial, as the mummy cases were chiefly made of Sycomore wood; and the fruit was well known to, and described by ancient authors who have written upon Egypt. If an introduced tree, its great utility as timber, and the eatable nature of its fruit, may have saved it from the fate of the Lotus flower, and the Papyrus, both of which have wholly disappeared from the rivers and marshes of Egypt: the rumour of the Papyrus still lingering in the vicinity of the Lake Menzaleh, proving, it seems, a mistake; another species having been confounded with the true Papyrus of antiquity, which is *Papyrus antiquorum*, *Cyperus Papyrus* Linn. Poor Egypt! how has she been shorn of all her boasted

splendours, even to her very garlands of Lotus flowers ; and how literally have the words of the prophet been fulfilled in the single and apparently unimportant, as in so many more remarkable and weighty instances—"the reeds and flags shall wither ; the paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks shall wither, be driven away, and be *no more*." ISAIAH. xix. 6, 7. In like manner the Lotus once so celebrated, and so constantly represented in Egyptian paintings, and popular as an architectural ornament, has quite disappeared from the Nile ; and it is remarkable that in every part of this interminable river that I have traversed from Alexandria to Khartoun, a distance of 2000 miles, I have not found half a dozen truly aquatic plants. Perhaps along the Rosetta and Damietta branches, and about the Lake Menzaleh, I may pick up a few water-plants on my way into Syria, as the Delta is intersected by smaller branches of the river and canals, and rice is there cultivated, which of course implies marsh land. In the Fayoum too, a few water-plants doubtless occur, but that I shall not now have an opportunity of visiting. The prophecy has received the most striking fulfilment in every part of the Nile, above the bifurcation of the stream forming the southern point or apex of the Delta, or that at which the *Barrage* is situated ; for not a brook now wends its course to the river, whose banks are hemmed in by high cliffs and sandy deserts ; and every plant that may have once flourished on its then reedy sides has "withered, has been driven away, and is no more." Were it only to view the "desolation of Egypt," a visit to this extraordinary country would be amply repaid in the historical associations, and the attestations to the truth of Prophecy which every day's scenery recalls to the traveller's remembrance.



What a fearful destruction must that have been, which could have displaced the colossal architraves of the great hall of Karnak, or overthrown the yet more colossal statue of Rameses II. at the Theban Memnonium; the raising of which, (if it ever really stood erect) appears to me an operation more deserving of our wonder than the building of a hundred pyramids like those of Gheezeh.

With kind regards to all our friends,

Ever your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter XIX.)

CAIRO, *June 11th*, 1851.

My dear E——

WE arrived here on the 4th, after a tedious passage from Minieh, the wind dead against us nearly the whole way, and our crew obstinately determined not to exert themselves at the oars except at such times as suited their convenience or caprice. They had so constantly misconducted themselves since leaving Assouan, and had received such repeated assurances from us of being mulcted of their "*baksheesh*," or customary douceur over and above their pay, that they probably felt all chance of re-establishing themselves in our good graces was lost, and they consequently took no further pains to regain their position. The boat's crew are paid by the owner, and not by the parties hiring it, but on the



strength of their former good conduct we had advanced the men, at different times, pay to the amount of 1200 piastres, besides occasionally purchasing a sheep or goat for them to feast upon; their ordinary diet being bread and a sort of porridge of Indian corn, or *Dhourah*; meat, they cannot in general afford to buy. Yet this kindness which we were not called upon to evince, was lost upon these people; they are good humoured in the highest degree, but incorrigibly lazy and heartless. Want of gratitude is universally ascribed to the Arab and Berber races, and from what I have myself seen, the imputation is no result of prejudice, but it is really one of the commonest defects of their character: although from their constant good humour and readiness to oblige when no sacrifice and but little trouble is involved, one would not suspect that a want of gratitude formed so conspicuous a trait in the Arab character.

Detained already by contrary winds far beyond our allotted time, I cannot quit Cairo till I have visited many remarkable places in the city and its neighbourhood, *Heliopolis*, the mounds of *Memphis*, the pyramids of *Saccareh*, *Abousheer*, and *Dashoor*, the *Colossi* of *Mitrahenny*, the chicken-hatching ovens of *Gheezeh*, the *Nilometer*, and the quarries of *Toureh*, from whence the stones used in constructing the great pyramids were brought. I also propose making a trip to *Suez*, which in points of Scripture history possesses the highest interest.

Cairo alone would give a traveller a good two months employment, in the endless variety which its labyrinthine mass of grotesque houses, narrow alleys, richly sculptured mosques, minarets, and tombs without number, offer to the eye; besides the diversity of life, of feature, of costume, and of colour, which the city

displays, and which is scarcely to be conceived; yet, taken as a whole, Cairo exhibits a most melancholy picture of poverty, dirt, disease, and degradation; of wretched ignorance, superstition, and the most puerile and paltry pageantry; but bigotry and intolerance, though said to be still rampant, certainly do not appear on the surface at least, and I am convinced are rapidly giving way amongst the higher, and I think even among the lower grades of society, through daily increasing intercourse with Europeans. It is really quite astonishing to see the improvements that have been made in Cairo since my first visit last autumn; ranges of handsome shops in the Frank quarter have been opened, and others are still in progress of completion, which let at quite a European rental.

It is confidently asserted that a contract has been made by the Pasha for the immediate construction of a railway, from Alexandria to Cairo, and that Mr. Stephenson will be the engineer to carry it into effect. The French are losing ground fast in Egypt, and the English rising as much in the estimation of the government. An Englishman can do almost anything here he likes, and of the respect in which the British name and character are held, we ought to feel very proud. The Moslem even respects our Church; because with all their contempt for other Christian sects, they say we do not bow down before images as they of the Greek and Roman and Coptic churches do.

\* \* \* \*

Believe me,

Dear E.,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

( Letter XX. )

WRITTEN ON BOARD THE NILE BOAT,

Between Cairo and Damietta,

*July 10th, 1851.*

Dear E——

I LEFT Cairo for Suez about eleven a.m. *June 24th* on a donkey, accompanied by its Arab owner on foot, to whom I paid on my return to Cairo one hundred piastres or one pound sterling, the distance to Suez and back being one hundred and sixty eight miles: the agreement was, that if I remained above three days in Suez, I was to allow a further sum of five piastres a day for the keep of man and steed.

It was a lovely morning, cloudless, with a fine breeze from the north, and although so near noon, and at the summer solstice, the heat quite moderate. The road for the first few miles out of Cairo is excellent, like an English highway, and is planted with young Lebbeck trees (*Acacia Lebbeck*). I stopped to enter and admire the beautiful tomb of Malek Adel, which stands at a short distance from the road-side. The dome is beautifully wrought without, and within most elaborately sculptured and painted, in the usual mixed style of tasteful though barbaric decoration.

The views on this side of Cairo are very pleasing, but you quickly leave all cultivation and haunts of men behind, and enter on the desert, upon which, on the whole way to Suez, there is not a single town, village, or even hamlet; but there are station-houses of the Transit Company, at a distance of about five to seven miles apart. Of these there are twelve between Cairo and Suez. They are in fact hotels for the accommodation of passengers going to, and coming from India, and for relays of horses for the omnibuses that convey them across the desert. These station-houses are ugly stone buildings, with no uniformity in size or design; some of them are walled round, and on the opposite side of the road are a range of stone or wooden stables, usually, like the houses, whitewashed. Within, the station-houses are comfortably enough fitted up, and are kept extremely clean and neat. The dining-rooms are very spacious, and airy, with divans, chairs, and mirrors, and the windows have good curtains to exclude the sun and wind. The sleeping-rooms are airy, with excellent iron bedsteads, and beds thereon, with mosquito curtains in good order; although on the dry waterless desert, this most odious plague of warm climates is seldom experienced: the few mosquitoes found, being generated in the water brought for the supply of the stations from Cairo or Suez, as I found their larvæ in plenty in my water jug. The articles supplied at the stations are mostly from England, as butter, cheese, ale, &c. and it is hardly necessary to add that the charges are genuine English also. These stations are not unconditionally open to the traveller going to and from Cairo and Suez: it is necessary to take a "*Station ticket*" at either of those places before setting out, to be able to enter for sleep or refreshment. This ticket



for which you pay the Transit Company £ 1, gives merely the right of entry, and nothing more; you can stop and sleep on the divan in the saloon as long as you please, but must pay for a bed, and any refreshment you call for, according to the printed tariff hung up in the dining-room. An excellent arrangement in these houses, at least in some, if not all, is that of having a medicine chest, with a list of the articles it contains, for the relief of invalid passengers, or those taken suddenly ill. The attendants are Arabs, who speak a little English; the superintendent is either a Turk, or European (Italian or Maltese,) and I met with the greatest civility and attention along the road; the loneliness of which is only relieved occasionally by a party of desert Arabs, or a string of the colossal breed of camels, that carry merchandise between Cairo and the Red Sea. With the exception of a solitary miserable looking acacia, held in great respect by pilgrims to and from Mekkeh, and hung with votive offerings of rags, which do not improve its appearance, there is not a tree between Cairo and Suez; but the ground is bedecked here and there, with low shrubby plants, a foot or two high, such as the fierce heat of summer is unable wholly to burn up; and of these, a species of henbane (*Hyoscyamus Datura*) is the most conspicuous and abundant. I have collected plenty of its seeds for the garden at Kew, and at St. John's, where I have no doubt it will flourish well in the open air, if slightly covered in winter; for I fancy by the look, that the plant is biennial. Of sweet scented and aromatic plants, there are very few found wild in Egypt, nothing like so many as our own woods and fields spontaneously produce; but in this desert, the pretty *Santolina fragrantissima* grew in abundance, and quite delighted me with its refreshing scent, being then in full



bloom. The glare from the white and yellow naked soil of sand and powdered limestone, of which last the Mokattan chain of hills, which accompanied me in the distance on the right, is composed, was perfectly dazzling in conjunction with the floods of light poured down by the noontide sun, now all but vertical, in a perfectly cloudless sky; but the strong, steady, cool, north-west breeze kept the temperature down to 90°—95°, and towards evening, it was sure to be from ten to fifteen degrees lower; so I gaily pursued my way, regardless of the glare, and with no other drawback to the enjoyment of the ride, than an occasional whirlwind of fine dust. In this way, I jogged on till I reached No. 4 Station, about 6 p.m., where I stopped and had dinner; and having remained a sufficient time to rest the man and donkey, I started again and travelled all night till four o'clock the next morning, when I reached No. 8 Station distant from Cairo 39 miles. Certain unpleasant jolts from time to time, during the day made me suspect that the donkey was falling lame, and it proved upon examination that he had lost a hind shoe which left the foot exposed at every step to contact with the sharp stones and gravel, which, with deep soft sand, alternately compose the surface soil of the desert. In this country horses and donkeys are shod with a *plate* of iron that covers the whole under side of the foot, no part of which consequently is accustomed to touch the ground; hence, an animal that has lost a shoe, is in the predicament of any one of ourselves similarly situated, and of course must suffer much from being forced to go bare footed over a stony road. There was however nothing to be done, as the donkey could not be shod at the stations, nor even, its owner assured me at Suez. This unlucky accident caused considerable delay from

this time till my return to Cairo, as the poor donkey could only proceed at a walking pace, and evidently suffered great uneasiness; although we endeavoured to mitigate it by binding a cloth several times folded on the hoof, so as to interpose a soft cushion between the foot and the hard ground.

This night-travelling alone on the desert, was, I must confess, very dreary work; I could not talk with my Arab companion, and at last got tired even of my own musings, having no external objects to divert my attention. Occasionally a party of desert Arabs would pass by, and give the salaam; and in the earlier part of the night we met many strings of huge camels going with their loads of Arabian produce to Cairo. These enormous quadrupeds, some of which will stand nine feet high, to the top of the hump, would suddenly, as in a moment, be seen looming like distant hills or rocks across the dim dubious starlight, and the next instant be almost upon us; their measured, noiseless tread not betraying their approach: they were quite invisible to my eyes at least, at the distance of a dozen yards, and it required some vigilance to keep out of their way, as such apathetic living machines will step aside for nobody. Another singular effect of the gloom was to produce the appearance of continual rising ground in front of us; we seemed ever about to ascend a steep bank across our track, which last, would appear as if furrowed with deep ruts, or full of holes and inequalities of all kinds: whereas, we were traversing a perfect level on every side, over ground comparatively quite smooth and even. Sometimes, the track, which was chiefly marked by the feet of camels and other beasts of burden, and here and there, by the wheels of the Transit carriages, would become so faintly perceptible in the

twilight, as almost to baffle the sagacity of my Arab donkey-man, who however, was never long at fault. The distance between the station houses seemed interminable, and as they were invisible to within a very short distance, our approach to one was notified to us by the barking of the dogs, that even here, as everywhere else in Egypt, are permitted as *hangers on* to the establishment, and are tolerated, rather than adopted, dwellers on the premises. To heighten the dreariness of our solitude, we ever and anon passed the skeleton, or half consumed remains of a defunct camel, the victim of fatigue or starvation, under which hundreds sink yearly in most of the African deserts. The poor donkey too, towards morning became so lame that I got off and walked as the moon rose, and at four a.m. an hour before sun-rise, I was not sorry to enter No. 8 Station, where I remained till half-past two p.m. and made a short day's journey; being quite sick of night travelling without one fellow creature who could understand me to speak to. I halted at No. 12 Station for the night at nine p.m. at which, as at No. 8., the accommodations are excellent. Left No. 12 next day (*June 26th*) at eleven a.m. and reached Suez at sun-set, thus accomplishing the distance from Cairo of eighty-four miles, in three short days of travelling, with ease and pleasure. This last day was extraordinarily cool and agreeable, so that I could travel under a nearly vertical and perfectly unclouded sun, with as little feeling of heat, as on a bright summer's day in England, or with even less,—such is the result of the evaporating power of the constant north wind, which allows no moisture to remain on the surface to obstruct the pores, but carries off the cutaneous exhalations as fast as they are poured out, and acting by its coolness at the same time, as a

tonic, neutralizes the debilitating influence of direct exposure to the sun.

The mirage was very strong on the desert this day, and had I not known that it was still distant, I might have taken this wonderfully illusive phenomenon for a first glimpse of the Red Sea; the Turkish fortress of El Azerood, which seems set there to guard nothing, appeared to have its walls washed by an arm of some sea or lake. At length however, the real Red Sea became visible, as a line of *dark blue* in the southern quarter, between the mountains of Asia on the east, and the lower range of hills on the African side; and I could distinguish the Hon. E. I. Co's steam ship Akbar lying at anchor in the offing.

The Suez desert is tame in comparison with the savage grandeur of the southern ones of Nubia and Ethiopia, but is not without picturesque features in the limestone hills that range the whole distance from Cairo on the traveller's right. The approach to Suez is rather striking from the fine expanse of sea, bounded by hills, which it presents. About two miles from the town you pass Beer Suez, a deep well of clear but brackish water, where we stopped to give the donkey drink. Suez is supplied by a spring at some distance, from whence sweet water is brought in skins by camels.

The town of Suez is a wretched, filthy place, and a few years ago was nearly depopulated by the cholera. The dilapidation here exceeds that of any place I have seen in the East, whilst its future prospects are brighter than those of perhaps any other in this part of the world; for if the railway from Alexandria to Cairo be completed, of which there is now I believe no doubt, and the line be carried on, as it most assuredly will be, to Suez, the latter must rise with the rapidity of a



meteor into importance, as just at present it is beginning slowly to do. With the exception of the hotel (a good and well-conducted branch establishment of Mr. Sheppard of Cairo), the post office, and two or three indifferent residences of officials connected with the Transit Company's concerns, there is not a house in Suez that does not seem dropping to pieces, and ready to fall whilst the spectator is looking at it. How such crazy tenements of stone and wood hold together at all; and, still more, how any people can be foolhardy enough to inhabit them, surpasses my comprehension.

The hotel I found extremely cool and airy, the wind, blowing through every room, made the climate like that of a summer's evening at home, nor were there any mosquitoes, to whom a brisk wind is an abomination, if not a destroyer.

The next morning I started in a boat for the Akbar, lying a mile or two from the town, where the water is too shallow for any but small craft to come up. The Akbar is an old vessel, and somewhat shaky from hard service on her accustomed station between Suez and Bombay during the monsoons: so she now lays up in harbour in that season, and runs during the fine months only. I was very obligingly received on board, and invited to sleep there that night, an invitation which to my regret I incautiously accepted. The sleeping berths I was informed I should find untenable from heat and cockroaches, so they made me a shakedown on the floor between decks, rather too close to the breezy vicinity of a gangway and windsail to be quite agreeable: then at daybreak I was roused up from slumber sweet, by the report of a 32 pounder just overhead (the morning gun), after which, there was no peace or rest for



the sole of the foot, for it happened to be Saturday, and all hands were up betimes, turning everyone out of his roosting-place, and inundating the deck with a deluge of Red-Sea water. So, having breakfasted on board, I took my leave with all convenient speed, not at all in love with the nautical arrangements of the Akbar, though grateful for the kindness and hospitality shewn me by the officers.

The part of the Red Sea, or of the Gulf of Suez through which the children of Israel miraculously passed, is a matter of much controversy. Sir G. Wilkinson thinks the passage was effected at the fording immediately to the eastward of the town, and of which there is an excellent view from the hotel window. There is no doubt that the sea formerly extended higher up the isthmus than at present, since recent shells are found in the soil above high-water mark; therefore at the time of the passage, it by no means follows that (supposing this to have been the site of that event), the part of the sea miraculously divided, was of its present narrow dimensions and shallowness. Others think that the passage was accomplished considerably *below*, or to the southward of the modern Suez; but the most direct road of the children of Israel from the land of Goshen where was their chief residence,—or from Zoan, where one must infer that many of them were kept in bondage to hard labour in making bricks,—into Canaan, was directly round or across the head of the Red Sea, or as it is now called, the Gulf of Suez. A still nearer way would have been by the coast desert, nearly in the present line of caravans from Cairo to Jerusalem, by El Arish and Gaza: but we are distinctly told, Exod. xiii. 17, 18, that “God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, and *not* through

the land of the Philistines, although that was near ; for God said ; lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return into Egypt." Now, the purposed overthrow of Pharoah's host in the Red Sea, might be as perfectly effected on that part of the Gulf on which modern Suez stands, as at any other point below that town, and particularly at an epoch when the head of the Gulf advanced further to the northward than at the present time, and the waters were both wider and deeper. God's purpose in leading the children of Israel through the Red Sea, was to get him "honour upon Pharoah and all his host," not to aid their escape out of Egypt, which would only have been delayed in proportion as their course was in a direction south of east. At the same time, the nearest route (in a direction north of east, through the country of the Philistines), was to be avoided, that the people might "not see war." Is it not therefore consonant with reason, that the children of Israel should be led forth out of Egypt by the most direct path they could take consistently with the fulfilment of the two conditions required, the avoidance of an enemy's territory, and the destruction of Pharoah's army of pursuit. The division of the waters by a *strong east wind*, and the expression that they were as "*a wall*" on either hand, together with the short time occupied in the passage, seem to indicate that this was effected in a part of the Gulf both narrow and shallow : a very few feet in depth being it is quite clear, sufficient to overwhelm the chariots and horses of Pharoah beyond the possibility of extricating themselves from the heavy tumbling sea, which the coming together of the divided waters would occasion.

Sir Gardner Wilkinson has I think made out a very good case in favour of the ford close to Suez on the east, having been the place of the Israelites' passage : Arab tradition is on his side, as well as the opinion of Dr. Robinson, and other learned travellers ; he remarks, moreover, very justly, that were the water even at the time of the passage no deeper than in our own, the tide which still rises five or six feet, and was in Pharoah's days perhaps still higher, would have been a powerful means of the destruction of his army on the sudden return of the Sea to its strength. See Hand-book for Egypt, p. 209-210, *passim*.

Just out of Suez to the northward, is a vast and high mound, indicating, it is said, the site of the ancient Klysma or Clysma, called by the Arabs Kobzim, a word signifying *destruction*, and which has been given, Sir G. Wilkinson tells us, to all this part of the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez) and the adjacent mountains, in allusion, he thinks, to the destruction of Pharoah's host.

Along the sand-banks that skirt the shore on the west side of Suez, I found great quantities of blue, green, and red coloured glass, mixed with the common red pottery one finds so abundantly composing the soil and rubbish of every ancient town in Egypt. This glass unquestionably is very ancient, as no manufactory of the kind exists at Suez or elsewhere, and the fragments are so plentifully dispersed in the sand, that a handful of them may be gathered in a few minutes without trouble. The colour of the glass is good, and some of the pieces are through decomposition beautifully iridescent. Dr. Abbott, to whom I shewed them, is of opinion that they are of Greek or Roman origin, and not the produce of ancient Egyptian industry. Amongst these fragments I picked up the neck of a small bottle ; but with such

genuine relics of antiquity, are now beginning to be mixed the broken remains of far more modern vessels, that were but the other day the cherished recipients of Bass's pale ale, port, sherry, claret, or some more vulgar beverage of Anglo-Indian consumption.

Suez was nearly depopulated a year or two ago, as I remarked before, by the cholera; more than half the inhabitants having been carried off by it; the place itself is however extremely healthy. The country around is a dreary treeless waste, without cultivation: but the fine view over the Red Sea, and the mountain range on either side of the Gulf, redeem the landscape from tameness, and indeed render it sufficiently picturesque.

A few miles from Suez is a place called Ain Moussa, or Moses' Springs, where the Consul, and other European residents have a summer retreat; but this I did not visit, as it has no certain historical interest, and is only a comparatively greener spot than the surrounding country, enjoying a supply of wholesome water. Neither did I visit the Bitter Lakes, some distance to the northward of Suez: they being only small bodies of salt water in the desert, the appearance of which I could readily imagine from the saline impregnation of the soil close to the town, and from those I had seen in Egypt. So full of salt is the ground just outside Suez, that the encrustations left by the evaporation of the rain water-pools and splashes, look exactly like the half thawed spongy ice one sees in similar shallow pools and puddles during winter in England. You may here pick up large pieces of pure salt in crystals of considerable size and regularity.

Remaining two clear days at Suez, I reached Cairo again on the *1st of July*, by the same route and convey-



ance I had taken from thence to Suez. The first day of my return journey was extremely hot, and the wind came like a blast from a furnace, as I trotted along over the burning sand. The *mirage* was extremely distinct and frequent, filling the distant landscape with a succession of phantom lakes, which mocked the eye with the most perfect resemblance of reality, as they lay shining and undulating in the thin blue haze. The smallest hollow or depression in the surface of the desert, although of only a few yards diameter, seen through the mirage, appears to be filled with water, or, as it were, a little pool : a poor sick child, whom its father was conveying across the desert, could by no argument be convinced that it was not water that was thus shining cool and clear before its longing eyes.

On the 12th of June, Mr. Page and myself made an excursion to the stone quarries of Toorah (the Troici lapidis mons, of the ancients, from whence were brought the materials for the pyramids), and to the pyramids of Saccareh and mounds of Memphis, near which, at Mitrahenny, lies the colossal statue of Remeses II. It was arranged that we should go down the river in one of Mr. Page's boats, whilst two donkey-boys were to proceed without delay to Toorah and meet the boat there, in order that we might reach the quarries in good time to examine them sufficiently ; but the boys thought fit not to make their appearance, or they probably got a fare nearer home, and with less trouble. The fact is, that no dependence can be placed on the word or actions of Arabs, they will break a promise or an appointment without scruple if it serves their purpose, or if they can gain a few fuddahs or paras more by their breach of faith. Falsehood, and excessive cupidity are the leading vices of the Arabs of Egypt, which, with their

extreme self-will, make it very difficult to manage them, and irksome to employ them in any matter however trifling. Dishonesty, at least, as shewn in continual endeavours to over-reach, if not by actual purloining, is another sad trait in their character, to which their avarice or (as perhaps the phrenologist would say) their organs of acquisitiveness impel them. The Nubians are thought to be more honest, and less mendacious than the Egyptians, but even they cannot be trusted, as I have learned by continual experience. The same fraudulent dealing is practised by them towards one another, as well as towards strangers, and the result is, a mutual distrust and suspicion, which is sometimes quite amusingly displayed. An Arab for instance, will often ask for his baksheesh or reward before the stipulated service is rendered, or even commenced, or he will at all events be continually reminding you of your having promised it; so fearful is he, that when his part of the contract is performed, you will fail in the fulfilment of your own, or give him less than he bargained for originally. Their avarice and distrustful disposition, cause the Arabs to be very hard at driving a bargain; and for haggling about the value of a para more or less, no people on earth can equal them. Having no idea of the value of time themselves, they cannot comprehend how others should; and the purchase of the smallest trifle in the bazaars or private shops cannot be effected without an expenditure of time greater than would be consumed in an English transaction, in the transfer of goods to the amount of hundreds of pounds. Much may be urged, however, in extenuation of Arab rapacity and want of truth: as for instance the extreme poverty of the mass of the people, to whom a few piastres is a little fortune; and then the wretched state of confusion and complexity of the Egyptian cur-

rency, which is of nearly fifty different denominations, and in value continually fluctuating, so that the most expert accountant is often at a loss to know the present worth of the native or foreign silver or gold coin that passes current in the country, varying as it does from day to day according to the exchange, or the decree of a corrupt government, which will only receive certain coin in payment of taxes or other dues, at a less value than the same bears in the market. The difficulty of knowing the multifarious coins that find their way into his purse, is one of the serious annoyances of the traveller in Egypt, and opens a door to fraud in every shape. Some of the silver coins of less value are actually of larger size than their superiors in value: this is also the case with the gold spangles that represent a ridiculously small sum, in, of course, a very debased standard, and which are wholly superfluous; as silver coins of the same denomination, or nearly so, are circulating at the same time, and that medium is a much more convenient one. Many of the coins of both metals have been clipped or punched by the Jews, so that few will receive them at their full value, and the reduction is made dependent on the caprice of the receiver. Money is so scarce, that it is extremely difficult to get change for even a Mejeedie dollar of nineteen piastres, unless its value has been taken in goods; and it is only in the larger towns that change for so trifling a sum can be obtained at all: in a village or small town, the possession of large money is as inconvenient as having none. An instance in illustration of this, has just occurred to me in Damietta (July 24th). Having broken the glass of my watch, I went to the shop of a European watch-maker (a Greek) to have a new one put in: the price charged for a very good flat glass of English or French

manufacture, was half a Mejeedie dollar or nine and a half piastres. Having no small change, I offered the watchmaker one of these coins, but even so respectable a tradesman was unable to give me the difference: so shutting up his shop, and locking the door, I was kept waiting in the street till his return from some accommodating fellow-tradesman with more ready money than himself in the till, who could furnish the change required, the value of which was about one shilling and eightpence sterling. The same thing has repeatedly happened to me in the crowded and well stocked bazaars of the Egyptian metropolis itself. It is easier to get change for a £ 20 note in England than for a dollar in Egypt. Every piece of money received in payment in this country is scrutinized with a most suspicious eye, and often objected to from having a small hole punched in it, or the mark of a file on its edge &c.; the only coin that never causes any trouble to the buyer, or demur on the side of the purchaser, is the little five fuddah piece (of copper) eight of which make a piastre: the para is the Turkish word for the Egyptain fuddah. It is absolutely necessary on a journey to be furnished with a sufficient supply of five fuddah pieces, to pay for such trifling but necessary articles as milk, eggs, fowls, fruit, and bread, none of which can be had from the peasantry, or in the small provincial towns unless paid for in the lowest denomination of coin, or at most, in half piastre silver pieces of twenty fuddahs; but these last, if offered in payment to a countryman, he would be unable to change, or at least pretend to be so. Marketing and shopping are consequently in Egypt, the occupation of half a day, and an affair of interminable haggling, wrangling, and disputing, the combined results of the over-reaching and dishonest character of the sellers, and too often of their



customers, as well as of the natural distrust between both, and of the scarcity, complexity, and debased quality of the coinage, against which, a people naturally avaricious, and extremely poor, are always on their guard. In the upper country, as the Thebaid, Nubia, &c., money is so scarce, that very little of greater value than the five fud-dah piece, is to be met with in circulation, excepting in the larger towns; most marketing transactions are carried on by barter, or partly by exchange, partly in money of the above low denomination. Coin, of a higher value, is not understood, and when tendered in payment, in general is flatly refused, and if the supply of small change is exhausted, there is no chance left of procuring the necessaries of life. But to return to our trip down the river. From the donkeys not arriving at Toorah, we were obliged to set out for the quarries on foot, and reached them a short time only before sun-set. The ancient excavations are being fast destroyed by modern ones, the limestone is used for building and for mortar, at Cairo, &c.: their interest lies in having furnished the stone for the pyramids of Gheezeh, Saccareh &c.; and in exhibiting the way in which the blocks were cut out from the solid rock, which is the same with that of the Theban mountains, of which the Mokattan range behind Cairo is only a continuation.

The next day we set off on our donkeys for the mounds at Memphis, and the pyramids of Saccareh on the opposite side of the river. I forgot to mention, that on our way to Tooreh the day before, we stopped at Gheezeh to visit one of the chicken hatching establishments so celebrated of old; the ovens are dark, dirty holes, and on account of the advanced season, the number of eggs in the process of hatching was small.

The mounds of Memphis, at the modern village of Mitrahenny, are of great height and extent, with huge fragments of brick substructions jutting out from the heaps of rubbish, but only a few memorials of art exist: such as the colossal, but now prostrate and broken statue of Remeses II, the supposed Sesostris, and two or three other statues of minor importance. The former was, it seems, presented by its discoverer to the British Museum, but our government has not availed itself of the gift, on account probably, of the great expense which must attend its removal. It is now not worth taking away, for of the features, which a few years ago were, as Sir G. Wilkinson states, in perfect preservation, and very beautiful, we could not make out a trace, so mutilated is the face by the Arabs. Continuing our ride through richly cultivated fields, and groves of date trees, we soon arrived at the village of Saccareh on the edge of the desert, over which we had to go for some distance further: the great pyramid standing in solitary majesty on a ridge of the desert, between which and the cultivated land at Saccareh are vast mounds of earth filled with human bones: I picked up many perfect skulls. This spot marks I believe the site of the Necropolis of Memphis. The day, as almost every day in Egypt, has been beautifully fine, with the never failing north wind blowing so fresh, that though fully exposed at the summer solstice to an all but vertical sun, on intensely heated sand, not one of us found the temperature oppressive.

From the ridge, on which the great pyramid of Saccareh (for there are several smaller ones) stands, you have a fine view of the Valley of the Nile, and of the entire chain of pyramids, of which, those of Saccareh occupy the centre, leaving the pyramids of Gheezeh

and Abousheer to the northward, and those of Dashoor, about the same distance to the southward: the second, and last of these groups I have not visited, being contented with the good view I had of them from a moderate distance, aided by the telescope. Indeed these celebrated structures, although so smooth and symmetrical when seen from afar, are rough, unsightly objects when approached; and of all sight-seeing, that of pyramids, to one who is not an antiquary, is the most wearisome, and monotonous. View these strange masses of stone as long as I may, I cannot bring myself to see any thing *really* wonderful or worthy of admiration about them: their vast bulk is their only merit, such as it is. The real wonders of Egypt, are her marvellous river, her colossal statues, and her vast sculptured temples.

The great pyramid of Saccareh is built in stages or degrees, and is much inferior in size to the two chief pyramids of Gheezeh, but it is still very large; and like them, a very dilapidated affair when you are close to it. In common with its neighbours, it is built of sandstone, cased externally with limestone, both, very soft and pliable, and the mortar that unites them is equally so; although it is the fashion to talk of the cements of the ancients as possessing a durability, which degenerate moderns are unable to equal. The base of this pyramid is undermined on one of its sides, by time or violence, and overhangs the foundation considerably. The ascent to the summit is very arduous and fatiguing, and I did not attempt it, but I regret not having been able to enter this pyramid, the main chamber in which has wooden rafters; but the drift sand of the desert had closed the entrance, which it is constantly doing, and requires to be removed from time to time, when a party of travellers arrives to inspect the interior. We had

only our donkey men, and could not have spared the time to seek for hands to remove the sand. The other, and much smaller pyramids of the Saccareh group, one of which is called Mustaba Pharoon, or Pharoah's throne, are in a very ruinous condition.

We did not visit the Ibis mummy-pits here, the descent to which is through extremely narrow passages choked as usual with dust and rubbish, the smell very unpleasant; and should you penetrate so far, you see but little except musty earthen pots containing the mummified remains of the sacred birds. Of this mole-like way of seeing subterranean wonders, I had experience enough in the great pyramid, and in Upper Egypt, and lack the antiquarian spirit to repeat such explorations at the cost of so many annoyances.

Between Thebes and Assouan is a pyramid on a rock, commonly known as the False Pyramid, because the rock, as it were, forms part of its base. This pyramid, like that of Saccareh, is built in stages or degrees, and although not large, is a conspicuous object from the Nile near which it stands.

Our return to Cairo was rendered tedious and unpleasant, although the distance was so short, by the strong northerly wind, and from not having laid in a stock of provisions to meet the detention.

A short time before making this trip, I visited the celebrated Nilometer at the southern extremity of Rhoda Island above Old Cairo. The slender, angular, stone column, roughly graduated into cubits, palms, and digits, stands in a square well or chamber of excellent Saracenic masonry, with Cufic inscriptions round the cornice as sharp as when first cut. Although when I visited it last month, the Nile was at its lowest, the base of the pillar was immersed to the depth of two or three



feet, and such has been the rise of the bed of the river since the construction of the existing Nilometer, that at high Nile the entire column, and the chamber containing it, are submerged, and the graduation has to be continued on a painted board, placed against one of the supports of the canopy which covers the chamber, and which is quite modern, the old canopy having been thrown down some years ago. The date of the present Nilometer is of the tenth century.

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Adieu : believe me, dear E——,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter XXI.)

DAMIETTA, *July*, 1851.

My dear E——

THE excursion to the site of Heliopolis, the On of Scripture, occupies about three hours on a good donkey, and was made by me in that wise, *June 21st*. The road lies across some of the prettiest scenery around Cairo, the neighbourhood of which abounds with fine views on nearly every side, singular pictures, in which the richest luxuriance and the most absolute sterility are seen side

by side; the bold ranges of the Mokattan hills, and the innumerable mosques, minarets, and elaborately adorned Saracenic buildings, relieving the landscape from that tameness which the flat shores of the Nile, and the level plain of the Delta would otherwise impart to it.

The road to Heliopolis runs between fields in high cultivation, and is bordered in many parts with noble tamarisks and sycomores. You pass out of Cairo by the Babel Nusr, one of the finest of the many beautiful old gates of this most picturesque of cities, and near which is the fine mosque of the Sultan Berdouk. Emerging from this gate you enter on the desert plain, on whose bare surface stand the numerous tombs of the Circassian Mamalouk kings, to some of which a mosque is attached. These are domed structures, of great richness and elegance of architectural detail, although some barbarisms are always mixed with the better style; and while at a distance appearing fresh and entire, discover on a nearer approach woful dilapidation and neglect. Farther on, the present Pasha has built an immense palace, the chief view from which, seems to command a huge range of ugly whitewashed barracks close in front of the building, which is the lightest and prettiest of all the palaces I have seen in Egypt, for they are generally the most tasteless, ill-finished, and flimsy structures imaginable. Abbas Pasha is possessed of a perfect mania for palace building, and I believe has some half-dozen in hand at this moment; one, I have only passed an hour ago, on the banks of this branch (the Damietta) of the river at Baunah Hassan, and which seems modelled after a first-rate union poor-house in England. Besides the Citadel, he has two palaces close to Cairo on the Suez road; and I saw another in the middle of the desert between Cairo and Suez, perched on a high

ridge, and near to which, I met, on my return from the latter place, a number of the ladies of his harem travelling in the carriages of the Transit Administration: I suppose, for the sake of inhaling the desert air, which, as I have before said, is a marvellous restorative, and, to these poor secluded creatures, probably the best of medicine. The Pasha has also a palace on the western or Rosetta branch of the river, besides that of his predecessor Mohammed Ali at Alexandria. The labour on these works is all forced, the men being compelled to leave their ordinary occupations to serve the government (that is, the governor), at a low nominal rate of wages, which, besides that it is very irregularly paid, is often partly given in sugar, cloth, or other necessaries, at high government prices, and always of inferior quality. The poor labourers are marched together to their tasks chained like felons, and it is most lamentable to see the number of children that are employed to carry stone and other heavy burdens much beyond their strength. The Egyptian children are the most interesting portion of the population; they are often very pretty, and very generally artless and engaging: their features, (especially among the Copts) often forcibly recall those of Egypt's ancient inhabitants as depicted in their sculptures and paintings; but a large proportion look wan and emaciated, and diseases of the eyes afflict at least half their number. The amount of blind, half blind, and squinting people one meets at every step in the streets of Cairo, is indeed incredible; in the provinces, complaints of the eyes are less rife, but still obtrude prominently on the traveller's notice.

But to return to Heliopolis. Although now in the height of summer, and the sun shining as usual, in an unclouded, though somewhat opaque or hazy sky, my

mid-day journey was performed as pleasantly as if on a temperate day in the same season in England; so freshly blew the north wind, to which the Egyptians are indebted for preventing their country becoming the fiery furnace we are apt to suppose it during at least half the year, and which it assuredly would be were this refreshing wind to cease for only a few days at this season. Even at the present moment whilst writing, although it is a sore adversary in the way of my watery path, I hail its influence with thankfulness, for blowing over and into my wooden abode, it keeps the temperature of the cabin within reasonable limits.

Whilst this is penned, a delicate thermometer on my writing table stands at  $96^{\circ}$  (time quarter-past two p.m.), a temperature by no means to be considered high at this season, in a boat whose wooden roof gets thoroughly heated by the long day's sun. At Cairo, during June, and what has elapsed of July, I believe the thermometer has seldom exceeded  $90^{\circ}$  in the shade; whenever I have looked at the instrument, it has generally marked about  $84^{\circ}$ — $86^{\circ}$  during the day: but at night (though the heat *within* doors has not been much below these points till towards morning, when it sinks at least eight or ten degrees), *out* of doors, the night air has always felt decidedly cool and invigorating.

The only object of antiquity still standing at Heliopolis, is the obelisk, which is just beyond the pretty village of Matareeh, a place, that itself occupies a part of the site of On, as is evidenced by the mounds on which the modern village is built. The obelisk stands in a pretty garden of fruit trees, and I must confess, requires the eye of an antiquary to appreciate its merits, or admire its proportions. I think that as an object of art, it is not a whit superior to Cleopatra's needle at



Alexandria, and to an uninitiated person will not bear looking at after the beautiful colossal and profusely sculptured monoliths of the kind at Luxor and Karnak. This at Heliopolis is but sixty-eight feet high, including the much damaged pedestal, around which, excavations are now in progress at the suggestion of some inquisitive Europeans, to ascertain the rise of the soil, and of the bed of the Nile since its erection. The situation of the obelisk shews that On or Heliopolis stood on the edge of the cultivated land, the desert being close beside it, not a quarter of a mile distant: and it is well known that most of the ancient cities of Egypt stood either *on* the desert, as do many of the modern villages, or on the very border of the cultivated ground, with a view to occupy as little as possible of the narrow, and therefore more valuable strip of cultivation which marked the limits of the inundation. When on the site of Heliopolis, it was interesting to reflect that Plato and Eudoxus studied the “learning of the Egyptians” in this once famous seat of science, and that it was the daughter of a priest of On who became the wife of Joseph, at the beginning of his prosperous career at the court of Pharaoh. The obelisk is of the age, it is said, of Osirtasen I. who, according to Sir G. Wilkinson, was the reigning monarch in Joseph’s time, and the situation still bears amongst the vulgar the name of Hagar al Pharoön, or Pharaoh’s stone. I may here remark, that the traditions still extant amongst the lower classes of Egyptians relative to the old Pharaonic line of their monarchs, are in general the reverse of complimentary to the characters of this dynasty. Everything strange, ugly, mysterious, or colossal, is attributed to El Pharoön, who, in the imagination of the lower classes here, or in England, is a shadowy personification of the whole

royal line of the name: popular opinion identifying as one and the same individual, the benefactor of Joseph, and the iron-hearted oppressor of the Israelites.

The ancient Heliopolis was celebrated for its gardens, which cherished the famous balsam or balm of Gilead-tree of Judea, which had been transferred hither, it is said, by Cleopatra from Palestine; but, whatever the plant might have been, it is no longer to be found on this spot; although Matareeh, the modern successor of Heliopolis, still sustains the ancient reputation for horticulture which the latter enjoyed in its glory. The same kind of balsam as that alleged to have been the produce of Jericho and On, is still said to be an article of commerce in Arabia, and to be imported into Egypt and Europe at the present day, under the term of balsam of Mecca. I have a strong suspicion that this renowned production of the East, is neither more nor less than common Storax, an exudation from a tree frequent in Syria (*Styrax officinarum*); but in this I may possibly be mistaken. I merely hint the supposition, because in England I am not aware that any article going under the name of balm of Gilead or Mecca balsam is known in our shops, although Storax is to be met with; and were the other possessed of any qualities rendering it really valuable and desirable as an article of consumption, or for its fragrance, or medicinal properties, I think it very unlikely that it should remain unknown to our druggists by name.

In a fine, and well kept garden at Matareeh belonging to Abbas Pasha, stands a venerable sycomore, under the shade of which Joseph and Mary with the Infant Saviour halted on the flight into Egypt, according to Coptic tradition. Without placing implicit faith in a story handed down amongst a christian sect so noto-

riously ignorant and superstitious as the Copts, I can yet believe the tree may have been in existence at the time of the "flight," for its appearance indicates extreme age; but supposing this *possible*, if not probable, the tree must have been in its infancy in those days, and much too youthful to have afforded any great degree of shade to the holy and way-worn group. However, I filled my tin box with twigs from the sacred Saggar el sitte Miriam (tree of the Virgin Mary,) as this venerable vegetable antique is styled; driving out of my mind for the nonce as much as I could of the doubt which mingled with my willing belief in the legend. I could not have that satisfaction of eating the fruit, which might have strengthened my faith, for alas! the figs had all been plucked by former visitors, or the tree had become too old for bearing, I know not which. The garden in which the tree stands is very pretty, but like all gardens in this country, contains but little variety of plants, and those chiefly shrubs, and ornamental or useful trees.

Before leaving Cairo, I had an opportunity which I had almost despaired of, of seeing the gardens at Shoobra, about four miles from that city, and the finest in Egypt, but which have been closed to the public for some time. Through the kindness of Dr. Abbot I obtained access to them a day or two before leaving Cairo. All gardens are laid out on the same plan in this country in long straight alleys or walks, crossing at right angles, or converging to a centre, where is often a kiosk or summer residence of the owner. Every garden, like every field, must be kept perpetually watered by the *sakeeyeh* or *shadoof* (the Persian wheel, or the more simple pole and bucket), in this arid clime. Egyptian gardens, both public and private, consist of squares or

phalanxes of trees, intersected by little raised channels, or water courses, fed by the wheel at the river, or from a well of generally brackish water on the premises, which is also raised by one or other of the two primitive machines just named; for pumps are unknown, except in Frank houses, or in sugar manufactories, in every part of Egypt. The trees are mostly of the following scanty catalogue; various others are met with there, but are not in such common employment for ornament or utility. Orange, Lemon, Lime, (abundant) Pomegranate, Myrtle, Oleander, Fig-sycamore, (*Ficus Sycomorus*) Mulberry, (*Morus alba* and *nigra*); Nebr, (*Zizyphus spina Christi*), Prickly Pear or Indian fig, (*Opuntia vulgaris*, *Cactus Opuntia* L.) chiefly for hedges; Cassia fistula, Lebbek, (*Accacia Lebbek*) a native of India, and the pride of Cairo in the Usbekeeh &c., Poplar, (*Populus Alba*) a tree of northern origin, but which resists drought and heat to a surprising degree, although delighting in wet places; Willow, (Weeping W. chiefly, *Salix babylonica*) Khenna, (*Lawsonia inermis spinosa*) called in England Egyptian Privet, and in Jamaica Mignonette-tree. The leaves of the Khenna are in great demand when dried, for tinging the nails, fingers, and palms of the hands of a dull orange colour, amongst the Egyptian women of all classes, and even the men colour the nails of the hands and feet with this very unbecoming pigment. Roses, which grow well in Egypt, and are very sweet, form with flowering shoots of Khenna almost the only fragrant nosegays in use amongst the people, and branches of Khenna either by itself, or encircled by roses, are hawked about the streets, and sold for a few paras or fuddahs, and are carried at the many public and private processions that are perpetually blocking up



the narrow thoroughfares of Cairo, thronged as they necessarily are with the passing stream of every day life, carts, carriages, donkeys, horses, camels, and the human animal. The scent of the Khenna blossom is very powerful; to myself, it recalls that of roses mixed with the fragrance of the wall-flower; but the flowers soon fade, and the smell becomes vapid, and positively unpleasant. I have no where met with the shrub *wild* in Egypt or Nubia, but it is raised abundantly along the Nile in both countries for its leaves, and about Cairo for its flowers; a fence or plantation of *Lawsonia* will perfume the air of the whole neighbourhood, particularly in the cool of the evening.\* The other shrubs in general cultivation in Egyptian gardens for ornament, are, *Jessamine*, white and yellow, (*Jasminum officinale*, and *J. revolutum*?) the former, a larger flowered variety than ours; the pretty *Duranta Ellisii*, most extensively used for garden hedges; *Sessaban*, (*Sesbania Ægyptiaca*) wild in the upper country; a beautiful purple *convolulus*, with deeply five-cleft leaves, used for covering walls and houses, and which I also found in its wild state in Nubia, but do not know the name of at present. These, with some others, are the principal plants of a ligneous or arborescent character seen in cultivation. Of Egyptian floriculture, very little can be said in praise; the garden of the humblest cottage in England can shew a more choice assortment of border flowers, than that of the proudest palace of the ruler of Egypt himself.

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\* The common Fig of Egypt is a variety I have never remarked in European gardens, it is of low stature, and distinguishable at a glance by the lobes of the leaves, which are longer, and produced into an acute point (especially the middle lobe) which is not the case in the common varieties, and the leaves have not the shining glossy appearance of the European forms; the fig however, is one of the very few good fruits which Egypt produces, simply because it requires no care.

Of the fruits of Egypt, I can now say with confidence, that on the whole, in no part of the world, are they fewer in number, or of worse quality. This is the height of the season, and I have visited the fruit and vegetable markets of Cairo repeatedly, as well as those of the provincial towns, and found little or no variety in any of them. Water-melons hold the first rank among Egyptian fruits; they are grown in vast quantities in the fields throughout this country and Nubia, and at this time of year constitute a great item in the diet of the poorer and middling classes, and are seen at the table of the upper ranks also, it being the custom to eat slices of water-melon at dinner in the intervals of each dish that you partake of. They certainly come to great perfection in this country, and, as I myself experience, may be eaten freely in any quantity without danger; and deliciously refreshing the pulp of the water-melon is in this sultry climate. Grapes are plentiful, and have been in season about three weeks: they are of all kinds, good, bad, and indifferent. This, after the water-melon, is the fruit most to be depended upon for quality: but grapes are neither so abundant nor so cheap as the former. I forgot to say, that common melons of every kind are plentiful in the markets, but not liking this fruit, I am no judge of their merits: I believe however, from the report of others, that a large proportion are of very indifferent sorts; no pains being bestowed in Egypt in selecting and propagating superior varieties of fruit and vegetables: grafting and budding being rarely practised, and thinning out and pruning equally neglected, every advantage that the sunny clime of Egypt would afford to the horticulturist is thrown away. Stone fruit is universally bad: the fruiterers' stalls and the markets are now filled with peaches, fair to the eye, but small, and very stones for

hardness, on *one* side at least. Most of the peaches here, have a point or projection opposite the stalk, and a somewhat oval form. Apricots are over for the season: all I have seen are extremely small, hard, and tasteless, and are usually gathered before they are quite ripe. In Syria, apricots are dried in great quantities, and exported to Egypt under the name of Mishmush, where they constitute a most palatable and convenient article of a traveller's commissariat; as, when stewed, they make an excellent dish, soon got ready; the fruit keeps perfectly well in this dry climate, and sufficient for a month's consumption, or longer, can be stowed in a very small compass. Mishmush was a principal article in our cuisine during our voyage up the Nile, and from its portability, it is excellently adapted for desert travelling. Zummer è deen (the moon of the faithful) is the same fruit differently prepared, and is equally known as mishmush, but is very inferior in quality to the former kind. It consists of the pulp of the apricot rolled out (after drying I should suppose) into thin sheets two or three feet long, and a foot or two in width; and from its dark colour, and the edges of the sheet being left untrimmed, it resembles nothing so much as a blacksmith's old leather apron; when dressed, however, it is no despicable dish, and in the upper country is the kind of mishmush most usually seen in the markets; we could seldom procure the entire fruit, and when we could, it was rarely of the best description. A small round plum, the size and colour of our greengage, and (if I recollect right) very like the Yorkshire wine-sour, is sold in quantities, and though scarcely eatable at dessert, is the only plum I have seen in the country. A dish of small wretched green apples and pears, made its appearance for several weeks successively at the dessert at Shepherd's hotel, for orna-

ment only I suppose, as no one could reasonably be expected to partake of them ! Figs are good and plentiful : the larger kinds, as the green Ischia &c. I have never seen in Egypt, and I have eaten figs from St. John's garden at Ryde fully as *saccharine*, and as well-flavoured as in this country. Pomegranates abound later in the season ; I eat them in their perfection last year at Alexandria, Cairo, and up the Nile ; but at best, they are an insipid, though refreshing, and splendid looking fruit. Bananas succeed well even in Lower Egypt, where I have eaten them as good as in the West Indies ; but their cultivation is confined to the gardens of the wealthier class generally, and to the vicinity of the principal towns. Dates of course grow every where, and are so emphatically *the* fruit of the country, as to have obtained the name of *Iamr*, a word which signifies fruit of all kinds, in Arabic. This concludes the list of *eatable* fruits, or such as might be made so at least by proper culture in Egypt ; there are others called fruits by courtesy, such as the Prickly Pear ( *Cactus Opuntia* ), the Nebr, ( *Zyziphus Spina Christi* ), and especially that of the Sycomore ( *Ficus Sycomorus* ) whose figs are much in request amongst the common people. In taste, as well as in aspect they resemble the common fig ( *Ficus Carica* ) but are vastly inferior in the quantity of *saccharine* matter they contain. Of the vegetables, esculent and economical, which are grown in the valley of the Nile, I shall give an account at some future time. A bare list of the various productions that line the banks of this ancient stream, with, I really believe, not a single mile of interruption in any part of its vast length, would almost fill one of these pages.\*

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\* In some parts of the Nubian valley, the desert descends to what may in common parlance be called the water's edge, yet even in these



On the 8th of July, I came up with a lion of the neighbourhood of the Egyptian metropolis, the so-called "petrified forest." This is nothing more than a large tract of sandy and stony desert, stretching for several miles at the back of the Mokattan ridge, bestrewn with fragments of agatized wood, and even with trunks of trees similarly agatized. The larger specimens are always broken across in several places, and are sometimes many feet in length: the stumps of the trees are here and there to be seen standing in their original position two feet above ground, but completely agatized like the rest. The quantity of wood thus transformed is immense, and chiefly belongs to some palm: a species of *Bombax* is said to occur also, but I could find no specimens of it.

The scenery of the rocky hills of Mokattan is excessively dreary. The distance from Cairo to the best part of the forest is not above six miles; I rode out on a donkey accompanied by the same Arab who went with me to Suez, and who, on both trips, rigidly resisted eating a morsel of biscuit, or drinking a drop of water between sun-rise and sun-set (it being the fast of Ramadan), although compelled to trudge beside my donkey all day in a burning sun, which must have occasioned excessive longing for drink. The lower orders observe the fast of Ramadan with exemplary abstinence; whilst among the higher classes (the Turks especially) I am told it is in private generally disregarded.

Just before quitting Cairo on the 10th of July, I had an opportunity of witnessing the performance of the

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spots, the declivity of one or both banks bears a strip of cultivation reduced to a few yards in width, being the space included between the water level at high and low Nile. I do not remember to have remarked a complete interruption to cultivation on *both* banks, in any part of the valley.

serpent charmers who profess to clear the houses of the city of the reptiles of that order, with which they are all more or less infested. Dr. Abbott kindly allowed me to bring the men to his house, in which they captured six snakes of a harmless description in less than half-an-hour, which number included no less than three different species. These snake-charmers belong in general to a particular tribe of Arabs, who boast of having possessed their mysterious faculty for an indefinitely long period. The chief actor, in this case, was a fine looking man, with a handsome and intelligent, but peculiar, cast of countenance. He carried a stick in his hand, with which on entering each apartment, he struck the walls several times, uttering, in a low and measured tone, a form of exorcism in Arabic, adjuring, and commanding the serpent, which he declared, immediately on the door being thrown open, was lurking in the walls or ceiling, to come forth. Presently, the reptile would be seen emerging from some hole or corner, with which every room even in the better class of Egyptian houses abounds; on which the enchanter would draw the unwilling serpent towards him with the point of the stick, and when within reach, put it in the bag he carried about with him for that purpose. It is said that the charmer conceals one or more serpents in his ample sleeves, and these he contrives to let loose in the apartment during his evolutions with the stick; such may very possibly be the case, seeing that in ordinary juggling tricks the quickest eye may be deceived by the dexterity and rapidity of the performer's movements. I can only declare, that I was myself utterly unable to detect such a manœuvre as that on which the operation of charming these reptiles is said to be founded; for although the charmer did not allow the spectator to be actually in the

room during the exorcism, he permitted persons to stand close behind him, whilst at the same time, the door of the apartment was thrown wide open. Besides, I have been assured by persons of the highest credit, that they have witnessed the feats of the serpent-charmers after their garments had been thoroughly searched for concealed serpents; that they have been made to change their clothes for others provided by the owner of the house; and, what is yet more convincing, have frequently been compelled to divest themselves of all covering before entering the room they engaged to clear. It is usual to object, that in these extreme trials, the serpents were introduced upon the premises the night previous to the experiment, by persons who usually accompany the chief performers; but it is not easy to conceive how, without some secret mode of enticing them from their lurking places, serpents, so introduced, could be found, and captured, at the precise moment when it was desired to do so, as the nature of this class of reptiles is to ramble about in holes and obscure retreats, and to withdraw from the eye of man, rather than, like the lizard tribe, to frequent open sunny situations where they are much exposed to view. Supposing the serpents to be introduced, at the time of exorcising, by the performer's attendants, (which could not be done in the room in which the charmer himself exhibits, as he always enters alone; and under such rigid examination, when every precaution is taken to prevent deception, he would not be allowed to have a companion), how I say, could the reptiles be prevented from making their escape amongst the rafters, or in the holes about the apartment, which instinct would assuredly teach them to do, rather than come and present themselves to view, unless impelled to shew themselves

by some influence like that by which they are apparently induced to come forth from their retreats at the word of the enchanter. Were the art of serpent-charming a mere juggling deception, how could it for so many ages have been exercised as a profitable employment by a particular tribe?;—it being, in fact, customary in Cairo to send to the serpent-charmer when a house is much infested with serpents, just as we should require the services of a rat-catcher, to rid our premises of those destructive animals. The extreme antiquity of serpent-charming is much in favour of its honesty as an art; and were it *once* ascertained that conveying serpents to the premises to be cleared, was a general, or even frequent practice, the poor, and generally covetous, and parsimonious Cairenes, would not give a *para* to have their houses stocked with noxious reptiles under the pretence of being rid of them. I certainly did not witness the exhibition under any of the above mentioned circumstances of rigid scrutiny, but the men were taken from the street to Dr. Abbott's house without a moment's previous intimation as to whither they were about to be conducted. One or two circumstances respecting the kind of serpent brought forth, and the weak, torpid condition of the whole six, throw a shadow of suspicion on the matter, but I am not prepared to object too strongly against either of these points; the torpidity of the reptiles might be the effect of the incantation, whatever that singular process may consist in; and although one kind was a species of slow-worm, it does not follow, that because our own indigenous reptile of that name never is found in houses, that no other species of the genus can inhabit the haunts of man, as the same may be said of *all* our English serpents, which shun the abodes of mankind; whereas, in warmer climates, snakes



of various, and totally different genera, haunt houses even in the crowded purlieus of a great city, as at Cairo, where perhaps not a house is free from them. The serpent charmers pretended to secure me from the accidental effect of the bite of these reptiles, by the not very pleasant process of blowing into the mouth, and afterwards pressing the lobe of my left ear between the jaws of one of the snakes, so as to draw a little blood. My late experience in the case of poor Ameen's scorpion's sting in the desert, did not strengthen my confidence in the charm with which, at far less cost of money and suffering, I was fortified by the Cairene exorcist.

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Always my dear E.,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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(Letter XXII.)

ON BOARD A NILE BOAT, BETWEEN  
CAIRO AND DAMIETTA,

*July 12th, 1851.*

My dear E——

THE present time finds me once more in one of Mr. Page's comfortable *Diabeeyehs* or travelling Nile-boats, almost an exact counterpart of the *Mary Victoria* but rather larger, floating down the mighty river on its

now fast rising waters towards the blue Mediterranean, with the Etesian wind still my opponent as heretofore, though now tamed down to a gentler breeze, the extreme coolness and freshness of which make amends for the delay it occasions. Books, botany, my gun, and the hopeless task of teaching Saad to speak English, fill up the solitary hours very pleasantly; the crew of Egyptians are much more tractable than the unmanageable, lazy, and less robust Berbers, who, though they so well manned our bark in our late expedition up the river, gave us no end of trouble on the passage down. I left Cairo on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and *ought* to arrive at Damietta in four or five days. For the boat, I paid five pounds, which included every expence. I can retain it, free of all further cost, for two days after reaching Damietta; and have then the option of residing on board as long as I please, by paying one dollar, or twenty piastres per diem, for wages to the crew—should I prefer the boat to pitching my tent on shore, in the interval before embarking for Jaffa which may be of some days duration, since there may not be a vessel ready to sail immediately for that port. I expect to find some good plants in the swamps and rice grounds of Damietta and the Lake Menzeleh, to which last I hope to pay a visit and see the Papyrus, still reported, though on very questionable authority, to flourish there as of yore. I wish also, if time permits, to make an excursion to Tanis or San, the ancient Zoan, “the field” of many Divine wonders at the time of the Exodus.

*Damietta, July 16<sup>th</sup>.* I left Cairo in the height of the great Mohammedan fast of Ramadan, which continues about fifty days, and is the most unfortunate time for a traveller to journey in, since everybody observes a strict fast from two hours before sun-rise, till sun-

set of the same day; an empty stomach being little conducive to continued activity of the body, or to the best humour of mind. Accordingly at this season, it is usual to turn night into day, and day into night, the former being spent chiefly in making amends for the austerities and privations of the latter, and very few of any class are found willing or able to exert themselves in their daily occupations as at other times: hence the requirements of a traveller are very liable to delay from the universal abandonment of the population to sleep and listless inactivity during the day, increased by the vigils, if not the excesses, of the previous night. The protracted fast of Ramadan is followed by three days of joyous festivity, to the no less disarrangement of the traveller's plans and desire for progress; and at this most inauspicious time I found myself at Damietta, both man and the elements opposed to my immediate exit from Egypt, and flight into Asia.

I had a very pleasant, though not short passage of five days to Damietta, this branch of the Nile being far superior in attractions to the other main division of the river, the so-called Rosetta one, which travellers from Alexandria to Cairo join at Adfeh, the embouchure of the Mahmoudieh canal. It abounds in pretty pastoral, and rich agricultural scenery, which in its primitive character recalls the patriarchal days of scripture history. The landscape presents a plain of rich verdure from the abundant crops of cotton, sessame, tobacco, carmiehs, dhourah, flax, &c., the villages and towns succeeding each other at short intervals.

We passed Busiris, near which are the ruins of Zel Basta the ancient Bubastes, where was a famous temple dedicated to the Egyptian Diana, who was called by that name; but these circumstances did not allow me to visit.

At Seminood (the ancient Sebennytyus) are very lofty and extensive mounds, from the summit of which, I obtained a splendid view over the rich Delta. These mounds sufficiently attest the extent of the city of which they are the crumbling remains; and the number of towns and villages visible from their summits, rising amid palm groves, and fields teeming with the richest products of agriculture, cheat one into the momentary belief, that so fertile a country must be both rich and happy, instead of being the poorest, and most miserable, because the worst governed country upon earth.

*July 14th.* Between Seminood and Mansoureh stands Bebayt el Hagar, close to which are the ruins of a fine temple of Isis, the ancient Iseum, which I visited. These remains consist of vast blocks of beautifully sculptured granite, parts of massive edifices, in the destruction of which, (by Cambyzes?) extraordinary violence must have been used; the different parts lying piled one on another in such utter confusion, that one can conceive that no less agency than that of an earthquake has effected such complete disruption and overthrow. There is nothing that strikes me more, than the evidences of extreme violence used in the destruction of the colossal monuments of Egypt: they look as if nothing short of some explosive agent had heaped the different parts on one another, particularly in this instance, not a stone of this once beautiful temple standing in its original situation.

Mansoureh is a large town, and for Egypt, a flourishing place; here, rice cultivation begins extensively, but this grain is even now not in flower, and does not ripen till October.

The country between Mansoureh and Damietta is very pleasing, and gives the idea of exuberant fertility,



and the number of towns and villages which succeed one another at short intervals, evinces a well peopled country.

I reached Mansoureh on the 15th in the evening: the weather which had been delightful all day, approached so closely upon cold at night, as to oblige me to draw up the *jalousies* of my sleeping place. It is this great difference of temperature between the day and night, combined with the humidity and exhalations from the rice fields, which renders the sea board of Egypt liable to fever and ague at this season, as well as to dysentery and ophthalmia. Mansoureh was the prison of Louis IX, in the time of the Crusades, and is connected with the Lake Menzaleh by the fine canal of that name, but which at this time was nearly dry, and in some parts quite so.

I witnessed to day, a singular attempt of a large snake to make his way against the current of the Nile: after persevering for about a quarter of an hour to stem the stream, he, with the wisdom of his race, yielded to the force of circumstances, and turning his head in the contrary direction, was carried without effort on his part towards the Mediterranean, in which quarter, it is probable, whatever affairs had called him abroad would be as well transacted.

The following day (July 16th) I arrived at Damietta (Damyat), the approach to which reminded me considerably of Venice, the houses seeming to rise immediately from the river, as those of that city do from the lagoon; but all further resemblance vanishes at the instant of landing:—a more ugly, uninteresting town than Damietta, I have no where seen in the East; it has not one of the redeeming features of Cairo. The rambling dilapidated houses are of a crumbling, and most perishable

brick, giving all the decay of antiquity, without its venerableness. I delivered my credentials, on arriving, to the English Consul, M. Serure, a native of Syria, who received me with much civility, and at whose house in the outskirts of the town I afterwards dined. The Consul speaks no other language than his own Arabic, and Italian, so that we were obliged to converse in a great degree through an interpreter, from my imperfect acquaintance with Italian as a spoken language: but his chief assistant, who conducts the business of the consulate, and is, I believe, called the Cancelliere M. Filliponi, proved extremely kind and attentive to me during my forced stay at Damietta, and doubtless procured for me the best accommodations in his power; a large forlorn unfurnished room, in a tenement (I will not call it house), of such strange rambling construction, and extravagant dimensions, that I am absolutely at a loss to say whether it was a single habitation, or an aggregate of twenty, or upwards; such a labyrinth of passages opening into rooms inhabited, and uninhabited, receptacles of dust, dirt, and rubbish of every kind;—dark, dismal corridors, whose walls were running down with the damp, which had been attracted by the salt and nitrate of lime abounding in the soil of Lower Egypt, and in the mortar and plaster used in the construction of the buildings. Before I could take possession of my forlorn quarters, they had to be swept, and the greater part of the dust and rubbish, (for enough of both were left behind to have given employment to half a dozen housemaids for an hour, and the cobwebs aloft were not disturbed), removed from the apartment to augment a heap of similar materials on the same floor, adjoining another deserted room, which Saad converted into a kitchen. This latter apartment Saad

affirmed to be haunted by a large snake, as I have already related. There being no bedstead in the room, the mattress was spread on the floor, which I speedily discovered to be peopled by innumerable hosts of fleas, bugs, ants, and cockroaches ; whilst from the time the sun went down, there was neither peace nor quiet to be had, when sitting up, and endeavouring to read or write, from the incessant attacks of mosquitoes, which sang their shrill, small, war-notes in my ears without a moment's respite, inflicting punctures on the back of my hands, the instant I relaxed in my efforts to drive them away. From these, to me, far the most annoying of all insect tormentors, I could defend myself during the night, by retiring into my fortress of muslin, as Saad and myself contrived to suspend mosquito-curtains very cleverly over the bedding beneath, by means of strings made fast to nails driven into the walls of the room, and tied to the window-bars ; but this was no barrier to the other insect annoyances, with the exception of the cockroaches, which it effectually kept out, as also a gigantic species of mouse, which replaces in Egypt the common European kind : it is almost the size of a small rat, the body very long, and the ears extremely large and round.

Besides these sources of discomfort, I was awakened every morning at dawn by the discharge of a brass field-piece, announcing to every true believer in the Prophet, that the hour had arrived for abstaining from meat and drink till sun-set ; a most severe trial for mortal to endure, in so warm a climate and hot a season as this long and principal Mohamedan fast happens to fall upon, in the present year. I may here remark, that from about mid-night, to the time of gun-fire at two hours before sun-rise ( the duration of morning twilight in this lati-

tude), during Ramadan, persons perambulate the cities of Egypt beating a diminutive drum, as an exhortation to the faithful to make the most of the remaining time allowed for breaking the previous days' fast, "to eat, drink, and be merry" whilst they may, as if persons required to be reminded of their dinner or supper, by beat of drum, instead of that unfailing prompter, a good appetite.

There are no ruins, or objects of interest at Damietta, which was once the emporium of Egypt, and was celebrated in the days of the crusaders: it has been also distinguished for its manufacture of dymity, which derived its name from this city Damiyat, converted by the Italians into Damietta.

The day after arriving at Damietta, I started with Saad on an excursion to the Lake Menzaleh, and the remains of the ancient Zoan, once the capital of the Pharaohs, and where the wonders of the Almighty, wrought by the hand of Moses and Aaron, were displayed before the stubborn monarch who "would not let Israel go." Through the kindness of the consul or his *Cancelliere*, a boat was engaged for me at twelve piastres, about 2s. 3d. per diem, and the former, obligingly sent his horse to carry me from Damietta to the borders of the Lake, where the boat awaited my arrival, with my travelling equipage of tent, pots and kettles, &c. &c. Neither M. Serure nor his worthy locum tenens M. Filliponi, could have had the slightest idea of the condition of the boat they had engaged for my trip; it proved to be a vessel employed to carry salt fish from the village of Matareeh (which subsists on, and by curing, the finny inhabitants of Lake Menzaleh) to Damietta. The bottom and sides of the boat were absolutely saturated with brine, holding as much animal



matter in solution as it could take up, and this impure salt, attracting moisture from the atmosphere, kept the boat constantly damp, especially at night, when a heavy dew fell, at which time the effluvium was so acrid, and so intolerably offensive, that I began to fear it might induce an attack of ophthalmia, a disease of extreme frequency in Lower Egypt, and to which travellers are peculiarly liable, from the united effects of the sun, and of the damp and coldness of the air at night, to all which exciting causes, (in addition to the irritating agency of putrid salt fish, the odour of which was at times so strong, as to induce slight nausea, and prevent me from occupying the floor of the boat), I was incessantly exposed by turns for several days.

The first night we made fast to the shore at Matareeh, a wretched little village with a squalid population, as filthy and miserable as the hovels they inhabit: the place, as Sir G. Wilkinson remarks, is "all fish." Here we were detained amongst a fleet of dirty fishing boats by an accident which kept us at Matareeh the greater part of the following day. In hoisting up the yard of the enormous lateen sail, which is spread along a spar of 45 or 50 feet in length, the head of the mast bearing the tackle for raising it, the yard, in its descent, struck the reis of the boat, a powerful athletic Arab, violently on the back of the neck, and across the shoulders, so as to render him for some time nearly insensible. On his being carried ashore, I visited him, and finding him in great pain from severe contusions, I recommended him to be immediately bled, to which, not only the patient himself (who began to cry at the idea) but those around him, men and women, strongly objected, alleging as a reason, that his blood was "good," that is, in a healthy state, and did not require to be abstracted, but on my

urging the operation, they so far submitted as to send for the barber, the person so called in the East is what the same class of men used to be in England, a practitioner in Surgery), but as this worthy on his arrival, to my great surprise, joined the ranks of the objectors, I found myself left in a minority so extreme, that I considered it most prudent to give up the point, lest, should the case take an unfavourable turn, I might be held to be the cause of his becoming worse, or it might be, of his death. So I left the matter in the hands of the barber, to be dealt with as he, and the crowd of friends around the injured man, might think proper; and quitted in disgust the patient's bed side, upon hearing the prescription unanimously adopted as the best that could be devised to obviate the ill effects of congestion—namely, the administration, internally, of a pint or more of melted butter, or rancid grease, for such is the so-called butter of this country! Calling however, the next morning, and finding the patient to my surprise, actually better, and both he and his friends perfectly satisfied of the efficacy of so oleaginous a mode of treating contusions, and having repaired our mast, we left the ill-favoured, and ill-savoured Matareeh, (so unlike its pretty horticultural name-sake at Heliopolis), for the Moez canal, on the way to San. This practice of administering oily substances for internal contusions appears clearly to be alluded to in Hotspur's relation of his interview with the foppish lord, who tells him that "the sovereign'st thing on earth, was spermaceti for an inward bruise."

Lake Menzaleh is the largest and easternmost of a series of shallow lagoons, that interpose so many sheets of brackish water between the salt billows of the Mediterranean, and the sweet but vapid currents that flow from the main branches of the Nile into the various

channels natural and artificial, that intersect the Delta. That this, and probably the other lakes, Mareotis, Bourlos, &c. were once inhabited plains, their extreme shallowness, and the remains of buildings still visible beneath their waters sufficiently attest. They probably owe their formation to the gradual elevation of the bed of the Nile, which the present depression of the bases of the ancient Nilometer at Cairo, and Elephantine, and the partial submersion of the two colossal statues at Thebes during the inundation, abundantly prove to have taken place. The effect of this gradual rise in the bed of the river, would be to cover more or less completely, and permanently, the lower levels of the country it flowed through. The greatest depression of the land of Egypt is in the alluvial plain of the Delta along the sea-board; and it is exactly there, that we find those accumulations of water which may be compared to the puddles formed by the stagnation of a streamlet that has found its level, and can flow no further. Accumulations of sand and soil, the former from the Mediterranean, the latter from vegetable and alluvial deposits, form narrow isthmui, which shoot in various directions into these lakes, and on the northern, or sea side, effectually prevent the water they contain from mingling with the waves of the Mediterranean to any great extent. The entire soil however, not only around these lakes, but throughout the Delta, and in various parts of Lower and Upper Egypt, is strongly impregnated with salt (common salt, and the nitrates of lime and potash), and in some districts is covered with a snow white efflorescence of sub-carbonate of soda, as at the Natron Lakes.

The water used for irrigating the rice fields, contains sometimes so much salt as to destroy the crop, or make

the plants very unhealthy, and stunted, as I remarked around Damietta, and at El Esbeh, where whole fields of rice were destroyed by the influx of salt water into that from the Nile or its branches, employed in irrigating them.

The boat entered the canal of Moez the same afternoon, when we reached a spot where it seemed suddenly to terminate, and the further progress of the boat to be interrupted. Here we found a small house, and several people, from whom after some difficulty, we procured a couple of donkeys for Saad and myself, without saddles or bridles, and accompanied by two guides, we set off, late in the day for San, and the interesting remains of the ancient Zoan, not far from the modern village, which has thence derived its Arabic name.

Our road, or rather track, lay across the "fields of Zoan," once, no doubt, a fertile plain, now, a salt desert, the nitrous soil of which, where not absolutely bare, nourishes only maritime plants, (Salsolas, Salicornias) and a few stunted tamarisks. Huts and miserable hamlets, are seen dotting its dark and dreary expanse: these, with some patches of cultivation on its outskirts, are the only visible signs of population, though traversed by the canal of Moez, a noble work of modern Egyptian enterprise, but with the history of which, I am not at present well acquainted. Sir G. Wilkinson says that in summer and autumn, this plain is the seat of malignant fever, and the abode of venomous reptiles. There are several other canals, as those of Mahmoudieh, and Menzaleh, connecting different branches of the Nile, but this of Moez, was by far the widest of any I had seen, although, it appears to me, abandoned for all purposes of traffic above the point where we landed; from whence to the ruins of Zoan is a good two hours



ride on donkey-back, and about half an hour more to the modern San, which it is scarcely necessary to say, is as vile a hole, as any place of human habitation can be rendered. The approach to the ruins is indicated by lofty mounds of broken brick, and the usual coarse red pottery so abundant on the site of similar ancient cities, and which exactly resembles the earthenware of which our ordinary garden pots are made. From the top of these mounds, there is a very extensive, though not picturesque view over the "fields of Zoan," the Lake Menzaleh, and other parts of the Delta, a treeless waste of saline plain, and dull salt marsh; bounded by the sea, and the rich fertile lands watered by the Damietta branch of the Nile, which I had so lately passed through. The ruins of Zoan *lie* (for there is not a stone left *standing*), not far from the foot of some hills; they extend, according to Sir G. Wilkinson, for above a mile in the direction of San; consisting of blocks of granite with hieroglyphics, prostrate statues, and obelisks, all more or less buried in the soil, which is here more sandy, and less saline, than at the Lake end of the "field." The obelisks are unusually numerous, and are said by the same writer, I think, to be as many as twelve or fourteen; a greater number, than is to be found in any other Egyptian group of ruins. I observed on my way to San, protruding from amidst the mounds, masses of brick work like those to be met with at Memphis; remains, unquestionably, of those ancient structures which existed before "*fire was set in Zoan*,"\* and "*the counsel of the wise counsellor of Pharaoh became brutish*."† The present aspect of the fields of Zoan is just that of a spot on which heavy judgements have

\* Ezekiel xxx. 14.

† Isaiah xix. 11.

been executed; for no one can for a moment imagine that in the desolate and blighted plain we now see, the proud and rebellious oppressor of the Israelites would long have fixed his court, and have raised structures, of whose magnificence we have such palpable proof existing. In a kind of pit or excavation, I found a very perfect statue: from the features, probably that of a Pharaonic king.

It was some time after dusk that we regained the boats, when a violent altercation arising between the Arabs about the question as to who was the person legally entitled to receive the money for the hire of the donkeys, some attempt was made to detain me, by seizing the turban of the reis as a pledge, and by endeavouring to prevent our casting loose from the bank to return to the lake. As this was a case in which it was out of my power to arbitrate, and it being at the same time expedient to return to Damietta, I forthwith issued a proclamation prohibiting any person from coming on board for the purpose of hindering our departure, on pain of being fired upon; which soon had the effect desired, of getting the turban of our reis restored to him, and ourselves under weigh for the Lake Menzaleh, on which we continued beating up for Damietta against contrary winds, for two days; nauseated, and half poisoned by the exhalations of stale salt fish, which as I have stated rendered it impossible to make the bottom of the boat my resting place by night; so I was fain to wrap myself up in a thick pilot-cloth great coat, and spread my mattress on a kind of little deck at the foot of the mast, bidding defiance to the dews, and (if any such existed?) to the malaria of night; preferring to risk the more remote chance of an attack of ague, rather than the being stifled with the reeking remains of Matareeh's staple production.

The scenery of Lake Menzaleh is extremely monotonous and uninteresting; the water is so shallow, that our boat was ever getting aground, or entangled amongst the beds of seaweed. The lake is full of small islands, and narrow tongues of land, covered with grass, salt marsh plants, and a few stunted tamarisks. On one of these small islands, the name of which has at this moment escaped me, are numerous Roman remains of baths, grottos, tombs &c. but the wind was so adverse, that I was told it would require at least a whole day longer to be spent on the lake, in order to visit the island, on which account, I gave up all thoughts of doing so. The water of this lake is beautifully clear, and abounding with fish, as the shores and islands do with water fowl of all kinds. Pelicans are numerous, and are to be seen tame on board the fishing boats, and swimming in the water at the villages like ducks.

When at Matareeh, I paid a visit to Menzaleh, a place of some size at the eastern end of the canal, connecting it with Mansoureh; the country around Menzaleh is extremely pretty, but the place at certain times of the year is unhealthy. I searched as far as I could the banks of the canal at Menzaleh for the Papyrus, which is reported to linger still in that locality: but could not perceive a trace of it.

\* \* \* \*

Give my kindest regards to all our friends

Believing me, always,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

Knowing your fondness for relics, I struck off pieces of brick from the mounds of Zoan, which are perhaps as old as the days of Moses, and made by the children of Israel.

(Letter XXIII.)

JAFFA, *August*, 1851.

My dear E——

KNOWING my wish to leave Damietta as quickly as possible for Syria, Signor Filliponi agreed with the captain of a boat lying ready to sail for Jaffa with a cargo of rice, the staple of this part of Egypt, to take myself and Saad as passengers for 116 piastres (too much by a great deal however), to that port. The bargain was struck, and the money paid immediately after my return from Lake Menzaleh, *July 18th*. But alas! two great obstacles stood in the way of our speedy escape from my dilapidated quarters at Damietta: namely, Ramadan, and the Bougaz; the latter, the more annoying and provoking of the two, from its perpetual disappointment of my hopes day after day, and from its being an unexpected impediment. Its very existence was to me unknown, until my arrival at Damietta brought me acquainted with this capricious and most vexatious hindrance to our egress from the land of Ham, and arrival in the regions of Shem: a transit which I was of course extremely anxious to accomplish after so much loss of time.

The Damietta mouth of the Nile is greatly contracted at its point of embouchure with the Mediterranean, by a narrow sandy strip of land on either side, and a small island; the centre alone of the channel being always



covered with water; but even in this part, so great is the deposit of mud and sand by the Nile, that the water when the river is in flood, or at the height of the inundation, is scarcely above three feet deep on the bar known as the Bougaz,—an Arabic corruption, I suspect of the Italian boccas, applied to the mouths or narrow passes between rocks at the entrance of so many rivers or lakes, as that in the Gulf of Paria at Trinidad, well known to English sailors as the Bocusses. Certain favourable combinations of wind and tide, are indispensable for enabling even the flat bottomed craft of the country, to pass over the Bougaz, and this necessary union of circumstances is commonly of very transient duration; and if the lucky moment is not taken advantage of, the Bougaz is *closed*, as it is termed, for perhaps that day, a week, or even longer, during which time vessels even of the lightest burden, can neither go out nor come in. At low Nile, and for many weeks before and afterwards, there is not water enough on the bar for boats to pass in any weather, and the foreign trade of Damietta is totally suspended. During the rest of the year, that is to say, whilst the Nile is rising as at present, and especially at the period of high Nile, which happens about the middle of September, and for a certain term during its subsidence, the Bougaz has sufficient depth of water on it to allow of vessels passing over the bar: but, even then, only under a delicately balanced combination of circumstances, can a passage be accomplished with safety. First, the wind must be favourable both in its direction, and degree of force; for if at all exceeding a moderate breeze in strength, it raises a surf over the bar which causes the bottoms of vessels to beat violently against the sand beneath, in passing through a body of water at all times but little exceeding in depth

that required for the draught of very shallow built boats. If the wind be, as is often the case, due north, then it is more than a match for the current of the Nile flowing sea-wards, and of course vessels cannot be carried over the Bougaz, by the stream in opposition to the breeze; besides, the surf raised by the mutual contention of the wind and water, would itself oppose an insuperable obstacle to the passage at such moments. However calm it may be, or however favourable the wind on the inner, or land side of the Bougaz, a heavy swell existing in the sea without, effectually bars all egress while it lasts, which may be for many days together. It so happens, that throughout June, July, and a great part of August, the breeze blows strongly from N.N.E. to N.N.W. (usually with the westerly tendency), with the force and regularity of a trade wind, imparting a delightful freshness to the whole coast line of Egypt, and even to the valley of the Nile considerably above Cairo. This wind commonly falls to a calm, or lulls very considerably at least, before sun-rise, and for a few hours afterwards; freshening gradually as the day advances, and sometimes falling again at night. It is chiefly during the morning that the passage of the Bougaz is attempted; the wind being in general too strong for the remainder of the day, and the lull at night cannot be taken advantage of, as it is then too dark to venture amongst the surf, of which there is always more than is wished for at the best of times.

You will thus be better able to understand the reason of the continual disappointment and deferred hope of getting away from a most disagreeable situation, which awaited me from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of *July* to the 5<sup>th</sup> of the present month (*August*).

During the few remaining days of the Ramadan, which ended on the 26th, the *reis* pretended that there was no practicable Bougaz, although the weather *appeared* most propitious for passing the barrier, and his boat lying at the quay of Damietta, had taken in her cargo of rice, and was ready to join the larger vessel (a brig) at anchor outside the Bougaz, in which we were to sail for Jaffa. The truth was, as Signor Filliponi told me, the *reis* had no mind to stir till after the festival following on Ramadan, at which all good Mussulmen are anxious to be present.

On the 27th the *reis* announced that the weather being favourable, he intended starting for the Bougaz, (about six or eight miles below the city) at day-break next morning, and I congratulated myself on the prospect of being delivered from the united attacks of mosquitoes and all other insects in my forlorn and ruinous apartment in Damietta.

Well, the next morning at sun-rise, away we went, floating gaily down the stream in company with several other vessels, and my disasters seemed in a fair way of ending in a propitious and rapid passage to Jaffa; but upon nearing the Bougaz, the whole merchant fleet made fast to the shore, and on enquiry, I found that there was not water enough on the bar for vessels to pass, and in short, that there was no Bougaz. After waiting a little while, we all made sail, and put back, not to Damietta, but to a miserable village, a mile or two above the bar, called El Esbeh, where is a quarantine, and a large Turkish fort. On landing the chief of the Lazaretto asked me the ominous question in Italian, whether I wished to sleep there: I supposed at first, he only meant taking a siesta, but he soon undeceived me by telling me that there was no chance of a Bougaz that day, and

that perhaps I might have to remain at El Esbeh two, three, four days, even a week, or more; so, accepting his offer to house me in the interval, in preference to lying in an open boat every night amongst rice bags and dirty Arabs, he shewed me into a solitary square building, having no second story, and which appeared not to have been opened for a length of time. There was no furniture, only a framework of wooden panels about three feet high, like a shop's counter, all round the room, called a *divan*, or *deewan*, on which cushions are put for people to sit, smoke, or sleep upon; but the cushions were taken away, and it seemed to me probable, that the house had been deserted, as too damp and unwholesome to be dwelt in; for the floor, which as usual was only the bare ground, was absolutely saturated with moisture, the house standing almost at the water's edge of the now fast rising Nile, and the whole vicinity being a marsh, half salt, and half fresh, and with stagnant rice fields at the very door. Visions of rheumatism, if not of ague, and the still worse form of intermittent fever, rose immediately before my eyes on opening the door: however there was no help for it, so we got our things in, and spreading our mattresses on the *divan*, eschewed as much as possible all contact with the floor; but even the woodwork on which we sat and slept, was by no means dry in every part. Here we were obliged to stop four entire days, the wind blowing far too strongly, and the sea outside being much too high to make the Bougaz practicable.

I really believe that had we remained in this place much longer, both Saad and myself would have fallen ill. I became quite fretful at the delay, and loss of time, and could not bring myself to read, write, or do anything, but wander about in the marshes looking for



plants, of which however, I found very few that were new to me. The vegetation is extremely monotonous, and, though abundant, is composed of but few species, and those of a singularly northern type: our Hampshire coast-wise marsh-lands are infinitely richer, and exhibit much more blossom. The absence of what dabbles in botany are wont to call "wild flowers," is a marked character in Egyptian vegetation from Damietta to Assouan: its Flora is eminently what these fastidious dilettanti call "weedy." However, I got one or two curious little things here, and at Damietta, and gathered in plenty both the white and blue water lilies of the Nile (*Nymphaea Lotus*, and *N. cœrulea*), the former is in no respect superior to our own white water lily, (*N. alba*) in size or beauty, and indeed I think it is rather inferior in these respects; the latter is a more graceful and delicate plant, its white petals suffused with a charming tint of lovely purplish blue, verging on sky-blue, but quite diluted.

Poor Saad complained of constant head ache, and I had the same occasionally, with want of appetite: we had nothing indeed eatable in the shape of meat, only lean poultry, as usual, with eggs, and a scanty supply of milk morning and evening served in the ordinary filthy vessels, by filthy hands. This, it is true, I had long been used to; still, loss of appetite is not regained by unclean and unsavoury viands. Saad had, of course, no other resource when not engaged in my service in cooking &c. but to smoke and sleep away the time. However I thank God, there were circumstances that made our sojourn at El Esbeh both safer, and more tolerable than it might have been. First, the wind blew strongly and constantly from the west and north west over the river and open sea behind the neck of sandy desert that inter-

venes between the Nile and the Mediterranean, carrying the malaria of the marshes and rice grounds away inland, and keeping up so cool a temperature by day and night, that I could scarcely believe myself to be under an Egyptian summer sky; the weather was like that of the south of England in August, very cool, breezy, and moist, more so than even at Damietta. The cloudy mornings and evenings, with the now rich sun-sets, and floating masses of white cloud in the mid-day sky, bring back European associations which are quite dispelled by the clear pale blue monotony of the Cairene heavens.—Secondly, I had the pleasure whilst at El Esbeh, of enjoying the occasional society of M. Arnault, a French engineer, in the service of the government, a person full of information and very obliging. He lived on board a very pretty, and comfortably fitted up boat, in which he visits professionally the various forts and harbours between Damietta and Alexandria, mooring his floating habitation to the shore during the day. He had been at the head of an expedition sent by government up the White Nile, and into Abyssinia as far as the fourth degree of latitude or twelve to the southward of Khartoun, our own Point Turnagain, last spring. He told me that when Louis IX of France, was confined a prisoner at Damietta at the time of the last crusade, the present bed of Lake Menzaleh was a cultivated plain with towns and villages, the remains of which are still to be seen beneath its shallow waters. He further informed me that the intermittent fever was frequent at El Esbeh, but was of a mild type, and usually gave way to one or two doses of quinine, and removal to a purer air; but that at Damietta the same species of fever assumed a severer, and even a malignant form, so that I may think myself and Saad fortunate in having escaped without an attack

during our continual exposure in open boats to damp and night air at Matereeh, on the Lake Menzaleh, and canal of Moez, as well as in our damp quarters at El Esbeh.

On the morning of the 1st or 2nd of this month (August) I forget which, the *reis* of the Bougaz announced that the bar would be passable, and all the vessels lying at El Esbeh got under weigh as quickly as possible, and we were soon at the edge of the fitful and capricious barrier; but only to experience another disappointment, as the wind freshened too much on our arriving, to let us assay the passage, so we all made sail back again to El Esbeh, with the disagreeable prospect of being detained perhaps a week longer.

I now began seriously to think of returning to Damietta and of taking camels at San, and proceeding by way of the desert to Jerusalem; but reflecting, that I had paid my passage money to Jaffa, and that the chances were about equal of our being released, or not, from Egyptian bondage every day; besides which it would take me at least twelve days to accomplish my other plan;—I resolved to await with patience the opening of the Bougaz, not in our former damp and unhealthy abode on shore, but on board the small boat in which we proceeded down the river, and into which of course our luggage, and travelling culinary apparatus, stock of provisions &c. had been carried, and which it was very troublesome to move in and out, besides the risk of breakage, and other mishaps. So I ordered Saad to spread our rugs and mattresses in the pits or cavities between the rice bags, where we contrived to nestle in tolerable comfort, though in a somewhat cramped position from the narrowness of the space, and the strange concavities to which it was necessary to mould the bedding.

In this way, well wrapped up, and in our clothes, which we never took off while at El Esbeh, we slept pretty comfortably every night, under the open sky, in spite of the dew, and happily, undisturbed by mosquitoes, which the brisk wind from the river kept, together with the malaria, at a respectful distance. The rice bags we lay amongst on board the boat were clean; the only nuisance was the close proximity of other boats, the dirty Arabs, and squalid wretchedness on shore, to which we were closely moored. In this state we remained till the morning of the 5th, when the reis of the Bougaz again marshalled the boats, and we dropped down once more to our former position, mooring to the sand bank in a manner to me very ominous of our return to El Esbeh, for the third time; but in the present case, there was not wind enough to carry us over the bar, which obliged us to wait till it freshened sufficiently, and an anxious time it was to me. However, about noon we made sail, and the *reis* of the Bougaz, leading the way, conveyed us in gallant style, with about a dozen other vessels, over the vexatious impediment, and we reached the brig in safety that was lying in readiness to take us to Syria, most thankful and happy to escape at last from damp, dirt, bad air, and vermin: of the last however we had not much cause to complain, as neither the boat nor the brig were over-run with the usual insect tormentors, and were for Arab craft, in very fair condition as to cleanliness.

About 2 p. m. our brig got her anchor up, and we were on our way to Jaffa. Soon the palm trees of the Delta sunk beneath the horizon, and I took my farewell of the land of Egypt, right glad to have traversed that wondrous and mystic land from its extremest limits north and south: but quite satisfied to have finished an undertaking which I have no desire to renew. Egypt is



well worth seeing once, and once only. I have spent many delightful hours and days on her classical soil, and under her ever-shining sun ; but there is a vast deal it is painful to contemplate in her, and disagreeable to encounter.

We soon discovered that our bark was a dreadfully dull sailor, besides that she was deeply laden with rice ; and the wind that during our imprisonment had blown from the very best quarter for wafting us to Jaffa, began to fail us, and it was not till mid-day on the 8th that we accomplished a voyage which under ordinary favourable circumstances, requires only from 24 to 30 hours.

I occupied the long boat on deck, in the bottom of which was spread my mattress, on which I sat and took my meals, read &c., having the cloth of the tent spread across the boat at night.

There were three or four passengers who slept about the deck at night with the crew, and amongst them was a poor Hungarian, driven from his country by the late disturbances, and roaming about the world in search of employment. He is going up to Jerusalem on foot, and from thence thinks of proceeding to Damascus, where I find it quite true that General Guyon is residing, as I was told in England. The Hungarian speaks his own language badly, as he does German, and a little English, and is my daily guest at dinner, for the poor man is absolutely penniless, the Arabs having some time since stolen his little kit, and what money he had in it. I intend giving him what cash I can spare to carry him on his way through Syria ; but my long detention in Egypt has increased my expenses, and nearly exhausted the stock of provisions laid in at Cairo, so that I must buy many things afresh that should have lasted till I got to Beyrout.

\* \* \* \*

From your always affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter XXIV.)

JAFFA, SYRIA, *August 10th*, 1851.

(Quarantine ground.)

Dear E——

HERE I am at last in another quarter of the globe, in Palestine, and at ancient Joppa, the scene of Saint Peter's vision, and of the raising of Tabitha from the dead by the same apostle. I arrived here two days ago ( the 8th ) having been cast about by sea and land, sleeping in all sorts of odd places, and amongst all sorts of odd people, since I left Damietta; and I am at this moment undergoing a five days incarceration in this establishment, for no other crime than coming from Egypt, which by quarantine wiseacres is supposed to be always infected with plague, and therefore unworthy or incapable of furnishing a clean bill to those who quit its shores for the no less plague-stricken Syria or Turkey. Right glad and thankful am I to find myself safely landed on the shores of Asia, for Egypt was to me (ever since I reached Damietta on the 16th of last month), a house of bondage. There was no getting away out of the land, till my release came on the 5th instant, when I may be said to have escaped from Egypt, rather than to have quitted it; so full of annoyance and discomfort was that unlooked for detention.

We are in tolerably fair quarters here in the Lazaretto, with the prospect of being let out to-morrow evening, or at all events early on the day after.

12th. We were liberated from our imprisonment in the Lazaretto, at sun-rise on the 5th day after entering it, having only passed three entire days within its walls. On quitting it, they had the effrontery to demand of me 95 piastres!!!—as payment for attendance and a private room apart from the poorer passengers, which they dignified with the laughable epithet of *una bella stanza*, for Italian is current all over the Levant at public offices, in commercial establishments &c. I was resolved not to pay this exorbitant tax for imprisonment on mere suspicion of the possibility of having the plague, till I had talked with the English consul, Dr. Kyat, who immediately cut down the demand to 70 piastres, which he advised me to pay; as, however unjust it was to require any money from the incarcerated of a Lazaretto, the officials were empowered by their corrupt government, to rob to that extent the helpless inmates. My "*bella stanza*" was a fair-sized dirty room, without the smallest article of furniture; one of a dilapidated set of wretched apartments that in winter, or in wet weather, must be almost enough to make one commit suicide, but having often before been far worse lodged, I felt contented, and passed the time away very tolerably in reading and writing; Saad, in smoking and sleeping, he having no other resources. The person employed at the Lazaretto to collect and fumigate the passports of the imprisoned, managed to lose mine, which, was, as you know a foreign office passport, good for the owner's lifetime, and costing more than a common one; I was much annoyed, as such a passport, with its various Arab seals and signatures, would have been an interesting document for preservation. I have yet some hope of recovering it; for, if the man finds it stuffed away in some corner &c. which is not improbable, Dr. Kyat has

kindly promised to forward it to me at Beyrout. This gentleman was exceedingly hospitable and attentive to me during my short stay at Jaffa, giving me and Saad the use of his house. Dr. Kyat is a Syrian by birth (from Damascus I think), but has passed several years in England; he speaks our language well, and is bringing up a young family of four or five children quite in the English way, having an English lady in the house, as governess. Besides being a chief merchant in Jaffa, Dr. Kyat exercises the profession of medicine privately, and without emolument, amongst both Arabs and Europeans. Mrs. Kyat is an Armenian, and speaks a little English. Dr. Kyat kindly took me to the reputed abode of Simon the tanner, in whose house "by the sea side" Saint Peter was lodged when he saw the vision, and received the summons to visit Cornelius. The Moslems as well as the Christians venerate the spot; and the former have raised a mosque on the supposed identical site of Simon's dwelling. It is quite *in* the town of modern Joppa (Jaffa being I understand an easy derivative in Arabic from Joppa), at the top of a high bank above the shore; and besides that tradition is unanimous in fixing the habitation of Simon on this particular spot, what tends to confirm its truth is, that the spot possesses an abundant supply of good water, necessary in the tanner's business for steeping the hides; and it is further remarkable that on the same premises, is a stone cistern of very great antiquity, still used for holding water, and which has apertures in its sides for drawing off the water when required. This cistern, it is not improbable was used by Simon as a tan-pit for steeping the hides in the liquor or tanning infusion, whatever that might have been in those early days, when moreover establishments of this description, were no doubt, as they still usually



are in the East, conducted on a scale of very moderate magnitude, compared with works of a like kind in Europe. Possibly, some part of the house itself may be as ancient as the days of St. Peter, as it has an air of great antiquity. I mounted to the house top, which is flat, as when the apostle went upon it to pray.

Jaffa is rather small, but a very compact, and closely built town, occupying the sides and summit of a hill immediately rising from the sea shore; it has no suburbs to speak of, and is surrounded by a wall and ditch, with a single gate for entrance on the land side, viewed from which in one direction it somewhat resembles Ryde, as seen on approaching it from St. John's. The country around is for the most part flat, desert, and very sandy; but for a mile or more inland, and behind the city, it is one vast garden of the richest verdure, and most exuberant productiveness. The grapes, pomegranates, and water-melons of Jaffa, are all first of their kind for size and flavour; such grapes, and so cheap, I never saw before; they rival those of our hot-houses, and for a piastre, you may have three or four pounds of the choicest black or white. They may be eaten with impunity in any quantity, as may also water-melons, of which last, I make nothing of eating one as large as my head at any time. Dr. Kyat took me to a villa of his about two miles from the town: he has planted the grounds with mulberry-trees for silk-worms (of which he rears great numbers), and with fine sea-island cotton from seed procured from the United States; it remains to be seen whether this celebrated cotton will continue to produce an equally long staple in the East, as in its very limited district on the sea-board of Carolina and Georgia. Our road lay through an Eden of fruit-trees, oranges, lemon, citron, mulberry, pomegranate, peach,

apricot, fig, and even apple and pear-trees ; but these two last succeed but indifferently in this low latitude and level. Date-trees already have become fewer than in Lower Egypt, and are much less productive. Our ride through dusty lanes in the mid-day sun, between high hedges of Cactus, was broiling, but the town of Jaffa is itself extremely cool ; the serenity of the sky begins here to be disturbed by floating clouds, and the aspect of the heavens to assume more of the changeful character of the European firmament. A scarcely perceptible *spitting* of rain, or what we should rather call heat drops, occurred the second day of my sojourn at Jaffa ; I have seen no rain excepting this, and a slight drizzle for a few minutes at Cairo last November, for these ten months, yet I am not the least weary of the perpetually clear weather ; the earth however, it must be confessed, would be much improved in aspect by a few heavy showers, as grasses, and most other herbaceous plants are quite withered up. Since the abolition of the corn-laws, and the introduction of the free-trade system in England, the trade of Jaffa has increased immensely, and many English vessels were lying in the roadstead, waiting for cargoes, chiefly of grain, wheat, barley, and round dhourah ( *Sorghum vulgare* ) which last is beginning to be imported in great quantity into England for thickening soups, and mixing with wheat flour for bread. Dr. Kyat also sends considerable quantities of Sessama seed ( *Sessamum orientale* ) to the seed crushers at Hull in Yorkshire, who are beginning to appreciate the value of the oil these seeds contain, so long known and estimated in the East, and of which vast quantities are grown in Syria and Egypt. It is excellent both for lamps and culinary use.

\* \* \* \*

With best regards to all our friends,

Always your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter XXV.)

JERUSALEM, *August 15th*, 1851.

My Dear E——

I REACHED the city of David yesterday at sun-set, after a journey of fourteen hours from Jaffa, which I left the day before (13th) at 2 p.m. sleeping the same night in the Latin Convent at Ramlah, the ancient Arimathea, and resuming my journey at half-past seven o'clock the next morning. I found the conventual accommodations, afforded gratis by the holy fathers of Ramlah to all travellers to and from Jerusalem, excellent; a roomy cell, beautifully clean, and freshly whitewashed, containing a table, four chairs, a brass lamp with four wicks, and two beds with snow-white linen, and mosquito curtains, bason, ewer, and towel. One of the brethren brought me for supper, a bason of broth thickened with vermicelli, bread, boiled meat, and a decanter of very strong wine of the country. The distance from Jaffa to Jerusalem is only thirty-two miles; the road is, and has been for a great length of time, quite free from robbers; so that people travel alone without the least fear, and never think of having an escort, or obtaining a sheik's protection. The cause of the length of time occupied in traversing so short a distance, is the execrable nature of the road, if such it may be called, between Ramlah and Jerusalem.

I am now in most comfortable quarters in Jerusalem in the house of Mrs. Simeon, to whom I was recommended by Lieut. Pengelly. I have delivered my letters of introduction to Bishop Gobat, and the Rev. J. Nicolayson. I am going out in a day or two to visit them and the consul J. Finn, Esq. at their *camps* about half an hour's walk from the city, for both the Bishop and Consul live like the patriarchs of old, in tents all the summer, only coming into the city for a few hours every morning to transact business. The new English church here far excels every other ecclesiastical building in Jerusalem, in real beauty and elegance, though much behind them in barbaric pomp and splendour.

I propose going to the Dead Sea, and the Jordan, of which I had a fine view on the 15<sup>th</sup> from the summit of the Mount of Olives,—to Hebron, and Bethlehem, and thence through Samaria and Galilee to Damascus where I intend introducing myself to General Guyon, now a Pasha at Damascus, whose mother and brother I know so well—thence to Beyrout over the Lebanon, taking the ruins of Baalbec on my way. Dismissing Saad at Beyrout, I take the first steamer for Smyrna and Constantinople; at which last place, I shall have five days quarantine to perform again. I shall try my utmost to leave Constantinople by the Southampton steamer on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, so as to be at home by the middle of October; but such is the slowness, difficulty, and uncertainty of travelling in this country, that I cannot venture to say by what steamer I can return, with any degree of confidence. I have however some idea of remaining here till the 5<sup>th</sup>, and of proceeding to Beyrout by sea in the steamer which comes back to Jaffa on the 7<sup>th</sup> from Alexandria, and which will touch at Acre and other places along the coast of Syria,



affording a good view of that part of the country. Then I hope to go from Beyrout to Damascus over the Lebanon, returning to Beyrout en route for Constantinople; the reason for this is, that the country between Jerusalem and Damascus, is not in a very quiet state just now, though better than it was a few weeks back, when several robberies of travellers occurred. In the mean time, however, I shall go to the Dead Sea, and the Jordan, to Hebron, and I think also northwards as far as Nablous the ancient Samaria.

I went yesterday (*August 18th*) to Bethlehem; the day was broiling, but the good monks of the convent of the church of the Nativity, gave us refreshment on our arrival. The screen in this church, separating the Latin from the Greek and Armenian portions of it, is, for taste, design, and execution, one of the most beautiful specimens of carving in wood I ever saw; almost every thing else in the church is as usual, gaudy and paltry in the extreme.

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I only add my kind love :

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

(Letter XXVI.)

BEYROUT, *September 22nd*, 1851.

My dear E——

I ARRIVED at this place on the 19<sup>th</sup>, in eleven days from Jerusalem, which I quitted on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup>; I visited Nablous, the ancient Shechem, and Sychar; Sebastieh, the ancient Sebaste or Samaria of Scripture; Nazareth, where I stayed two days and a half—during which time I went to Mount Tabor;—Mount Carmel; and so I came on by the sea coast through Acre, Tyre, and Sidon, to this place.

The day after to-morrow (24<sup>th</sup>) we have arranged to set out for Damascus. The journey will occupy us three days in going, and three or perhaps four days in returning.

I intend remaining at Damascus only to see the antiquities there, and on my return to rest quietly at Beyrout till the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, when the Austrian Lloyds steamer leaves for Smyrna and Constantinople, touching at Cyprus, where she remains a day, Scanderoun and Rhodes, where she also stops for twenty-four or thirty-six hours: but unfortunately passengers from Beyrout are not permitted to land, on account of the absurd quarantine, although they may do so on coming to Beyrout from Constantinople; as though the

latter place were less subject to plague than the Syrian capital. If however I find that I can quit Smyrna in a very few days after performing quarantine there, I shall be tempted to remain a short time in a place so highly spoken of for the beauty of its situation and neighbourhood; but if on enquiry I find that no steamer will leave it in a reasonable time for Constantinople, I shall go directly thither, and the moment I can fix the day for quitting the latter place, I will let you know.

I am busy with the arrangements for our journey to Damascus and Baalbec, which will conclude my Syrian travels; after which every successive day will bring me nearer to dear old England.

I have had quite as much as I wish of Eastern travel, enough to furnish many pleasing reminiscences of past events, and of distant scenery; but I am not sorry that my long pilgrimage is drawing to a close, and that, with God's will, I shall soon return to enjoy the blessings and comforts of "home, sweet home."

The weather here is extremely sultry: the fine, cool, dry breezes of Egypt, and of the hill country of Syria and Palestine, are here exchanged for humid sea-winds, which, not allowing the pores to act freely, impart a feeling of much higher temperature than really prevails; the thermometer not being above 80°—84°. The nights too are hot, and the sky often overcast, and much less clear and serene than in the interior. Yesterday, the high peaks of Lebanon, towering aloft behind Beyrout in an awfully grand manner, were shrouded in thick clouds, which seemed ready to descend over the town in a deluge of rain; but these are menaces, which are here rarely or never carried into execution between April and December, a season seldom refreshed by even a passing shower; but the dews, the natural moisture

of the air, and numerous springs, keep Beyrout pretty verdant even at this time of the year; and no place in Syria, excepting perhaps Damascus, abounds more with gardens and orchards than this. For some miles before reaching the town, our road lay through grounds in the highest state of cultivation.

I am acquainted with no one here; our Consul being still in the mountains, as is the British Chaplain, and almost every other functionary who can escape from the sultry atmosphere of this coast.

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Believe me ever,

My dear E.,

Your affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD.

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*THE preceding Letters have been revised by a much loved friend of the writer, the Rev. Gerard Smith, who has simply omitted the few words and sentences, which he deemed unsuitable except for the eye of the near relative to whom they were addressed.*

*The Notes and Memoranda appended, were made by the way, and are given as they were found in Dr. Bromfield's portfolio.*

## JOURNAL.

*Excursion from Jerusalem to Jericho  
and the Dead Sea : (from Notes.)*

*August 30th.* Start for Jericho, Jordan, and the Dead Sea, as late as 2 p.m. (not having been very well for some days past) accompanied by Mr. Simeon's servant (Saad being ill,) a muleteer, and four armed men. The Hill country of Judea on the eastern slope has less vegetation than on the western ascent. Fine view of Jerusalem from the vicinity of Bethany, as also of the Dead Sea—Extraordinarily wild character of the scenery, and change of temperature, the latter, most sudden and perceptible on approaching Jericho, when the desert becomes excessively precipitous, and the scenery awfully grand. Cross the brook or rivulet of Ain Sultana\* and pass by some ruined arches of Saracenic work, said by Arab tradition to be the remains of ancient sugar-works, but it being dark at the time, I could only dimly discern these, and the surrounding scenery, which appeared to be covered with a good deal of thicket, and tolerably sized trees, amongst which we wended our way in the obscurity to Riah, supposed to occupy the site, or nearly so, of Jericho, and now, only a collection of miserable huts, near which, and a half dried up brook, full of vociferous frogs, and close to a square building called the citadel, I pitched my tent for the night. Temperature about 9 p.m. in the tent, 85°.

Disturbed all night by troops of dogs prowling, growling, and barking around the tent, by my Arab escort's

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\* Generally believed to be the waters which were healed, or made sweet by Elisha. II. Kings—chap. 2 v. 19—22.

chattering, the noise of the villagers, and the heat. On our arrival, some of the inhabitants of Jericho collected about us; but we were soon left (as far at least as they were concerned), to rest our wearied limbs in peace.

Rose at four next morning, *August 31st*, as the first faint dawn brought out the mountain summits of Gilead, Ammon, and Moab in strong relief against the eastern sky; and before sun-rise, we were again on the move across the plain of Jericho towards the Jordan, a ride of about two hours—Fine view of the Quarantana, the alleged “exceeding high mountain” the scene of our Saviour’s final temptation in the wilderness—Plain of the Jordan, its shrubs and white saline efflorescence on the soil—The Jordan, its whiteness, and rapidity—beautiful belt of wood along its banks—temperature of the stream at 7 a.m. in a part of the bank shaded by trees, 87°!!—Probable scene of the parting of Jordan, by the mantle of Elijah and Elisha, and the translation of the former in a chariot of fire.

Leave bank of the Jordan for the Dead Sea, to which a ride of about an hour brought us—Extreme grandeur of the scenery, exceeding far the idea I had previously formed of it—Beautiful blue of the Dead Sea, and extreme clearness of its waters, their intolerably acrimonious scalding bitterness.—Great quantity of drift wood on its shores, brought down by the river Jordan, Arnon, and other rivers from the mountains.—A small flock of aquatic birds flew over, and settled down on its placid bosom in my sight.—The ground about the lake not devoid of vegetation by any means.

Breakfast under a rough structure close to the edge of the lake, formed of a few large branches of drift timber, over which we spread one of our horse cloths to exclude the sun in some degree overhead—Extreme heat under

this partial shelter, 92° at 9 a.m. with a gentle breeze. Atmosphere filled with a soft blueish white haze, which obscured the view of very distant objects, whilst the air and mountains seemed glowing like a furnace as in the deserts of Ethiopia, and the valley of Upper Egypt.—Meet no man, either Arab or traveller—Horror entertained by the latter of a visit to the Dead Sea at this season of the year, some even deeming it full of peril to life from the heat:—I, however, found it not only quite tolerable, but far from unpleasant, on account of the fine breeze from the water and adjoining mountain ranges.

After breakfast, and a short stroll along the beach, which is composed of small pebbles and sand, I prepared for my ascent to the convent of Mar Saba, distant seven hours from the Dead Sea, and from Jerusalem.

The ascent to Mar Saba is by a gorge in the mountains Engedi (still called by a name nearly exactly similar by the Arabs of the present day), and which were the scene of David's wanderings to escape the persecution of Saul; and in Solomon's time celebrated for their vineyards, and apocryphal "clusters of camphire!" Cant. i. 14. The plain between the Dead Sea and the foot of the limestone mountains here about a mile and a half, or at most two miles broad, is covered with a luxuriant growth of reeds (*Arundo Donax*) Tamarisk, Orache, (*Atriplex Halimus*) and a gigantic shrubby species of *Salicornia* apparently, with cylindrical fleshy leaves, and very thick woody stems. Here, strange to say, from the saline ground issues a spring of fine sweet water, at which my thirsty Arab escorts loitered to drink: the spring is quite overgrown and concealed by a thicket of tall reeds and other grasses. A fine breeze from the lake and mountains felt quite cool, and tempered the now fierce heat of the profound and vast cauldron whose sides we were about to



ascend, and which is said to be the most depressed spot on the earth's natural surface, although the measurements given differ too widely amongst themselves to be deserving of much confidence.

The road from the Dead Sea to Mar Saba, and onward to Jerusalem, is much less steep and rugged than that from Jericho and the Jordan to the same city, and has the advantage of affording, in addition to its own stupendous scenery, the most magnificent views imaginable of that mysterious lake which with its clear expanse of tranquil but ponderous water lies far beneath in its rocky recess, like a vast polished mirror of crystal in a dark frame. Even from the breezy summit of Engedi, the opposite mountains of Moab still tower above the observer; and from the hill of Zion itself present the aspect of a vast perpendicular wall, close at hand, and shutting out the world to the south-east, though many hours of toilsome journey must be performed e're they can be even approached by the width of the still intervening Asphaltic lake. The heat was extremely great as we wended our devious way along the deep valley or defile between the lofty mountains on either side of the rugged path, which, composed of white limestone, much resembling indurated chalk, reflected the sun's rays with dazzling effect; and, the vegetation consisting merely of small thinly scattered shrubs, and the burnt up remains of the spring plants, without a single tree, of course shade and shelter from the scorching sun could in no place be found; but occasionally our route lay over the summits of these lofty eminences, when we were sure to enjoy a cooler temperature, the ventilation of a pure mountain breeze, and a view of surpassing magnificence. We passed one or two Arab encampments of dark horse hair tents, and several springs and wells of fine water, at

which we refreshed ourselves, and our heated beasts. Small fields and patches of cultivation are seen occasionally in the valleys, but the general character of the scenery is that of wild nature, stern, and at a distance bare, although not really so, and far indeed from the barren solitude of the Ethiopian desert scenery. There is a sameness in even the sublimity of the hill country of Judea, that wearies by the endless succession of mount and vale, and we hailed with pleasure the interruption of this monotony of grandeur, in the deep chasm disclosing the now dry bed of the brook Kedron: and skirting the margin of which, the welcome vicinity of Mar Saba was announced in the deep tones of the convent clock. A few minutes afterwards I found myself comfortably reclining on the divans of the clean and spacious apartment which the hospitable fathers have always ready swept and garnished for any pilgrim who may arrive duly recommended, by a letter from the Greek convent at Jerusalem, to their good offices; and with such I came provided.

I will not here give a detailed description of the Mar Saba, because, if I recollect right, a full account, and faithful sketch of this convent is to be found in the "Christian Researches in Palestine," not to mention other works on the Holy Land. It is most romantically nestled in a niche of the ravine overhanging the brook Kedron, and is so substantially built, as to have almost as much the air of a fortress as of a convent. The few monks who came forth from their cells seemed very aged men. Mar (St.) Saba, seems to have been a saint of the middle ages. The fare set before me was fruit, and a sort of aniseed cordial.

*Excursion to Hebron.*

*September 2nd.* Started from Jerusalem for Hebron attended by a guide and Saad, no escort being needed for this now peaceable and frequented neighbourhood.

Plain and valley of Rephaim, and picturesque appearance of Bethlehem from the fine convent of Mar Elyas just above the valley of Rephaim; but the view of Jerusalem from this or the Bethlehem road is the least striking of any, the finest being decidedly those in coming from the Dead Sea via Mar Saba, that from the Mount of Olives, and from Bethany.—Singular and interesting peak called the Frank mountain, the truncated summit of which is hollowed like the crater of a volcano: it is said to be the ancient Herodium.

Passing Rachel's Tomb, we were agreeably surprised at finding it open! and within the very sanctuary itself, a number of Jews assembled, who to the amount of about a dozen were seated at the foot of the well facing the tomb, repeating, or rather gabbling with extraordinary *volubility* in a chanting or measured tone of voice, and slight inclination of the head from side to side, the psalms of David from printed Hebrew books. We were permitted by the Moslem guardians of the building to enter without the slightest opposition, and seated ourselves beside the devotees, who continued their singular service without regarding our intrusion. We were the more surprised at gaining an entry, since we believed (as it is generally stated in books of travel), that the Tomb of Rachel, like the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, and the sepulchre of Abraham at Hebron, is zealously closed against Jews and Christians at all times without exception.

Pools of Solomon—about an hour's ride beyond Bethlehem;—their great size, and depth, and good preservation of the masonry.

Wretched road—softer character of the country—between Bethlehem and Hebron, the rounded hills thickly clothed with shrubs, chiefly dwarf prickly oak *Quercus gramuntia*, *Arbutus* (*Andrachne*?) *Pistacia terebinthus*, *Rhus*?—Indications of paving along the road in some places; and on nearing Hebron, the way goes over what would appear to have been the ancient high road from Jerusalem to that city, having unmistakeable evidence of pavement, now in a very rough and broken condition for a mile or more from Hebron, forming a deep road winding between walls, and vineyards of great luxuriance.—Enter Hebron long after dark.—Put up at the house of a Jew who usually receives strangers, called Ephraim Levi.—Strange approach to the houses, and extreme slipperiness of the pavements.

Our host a good Hebrew scholar—Wine of Hebron, a rich, sweet, full bodied beverage, very palatable, but probably not wholesome.

*September 3rd.* Walked out before breakfast to the Oak of Mamre, about a mile and a half from Hebron.—Fine view of Hebron from the ascent in that direction.—Its most ancient scripture name of Kirjath Arba, signifying four cities, is perfectly applicable to the modern town, which seems to consist when viewed from an eminence of four distinct villages, each, a strange labyrinth of gloomy abodes, stone houses, with flat or domed roofs; most of the rooms, as at Jaffa and Jerusalem, being covered in with massive arched masonry, and scarcely any timber employed in their construction, which is a great preservative against fire.



Oak of Mamre—Objections to its identity with Abraham's tree, which is said to have been a turpentine tree (*Pistacia Terebinthus*)--Locality denied by the Jews—Loss of one of the largest limbs of this tree by the accumulation of snow upon it in the severe winter of 1850, when the fall was knee deep in the streets of Jerusalem—High cultivation about Hebron, rich vineyards, and olive gardens—Hebron's great antiquity—Built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.

Ain Sarah (Sarah's fountain) is a spring by the roadside, a short distance from Hebron—Pools of Hebron—Site of the murder of Ishbosheth; and punishment of the murderer by David.

Character of the Hebronites, its boldness, turbulence, lawlessness, and independent love of liberty. The present governor, almost an absolute ruler, and by all accounts extremely difficult to deal with. Handsome features are remarkably prevalent amongst the inhabitants; the women, many of them fair with blue eyes. On our way through the maze of steep, slippery passages, leading from our lodgings into the main street, we passed through a small court full of these *blonde* daughters of Hebron, some of whom were extremely pretty. The men too, are fine tall fellows, with intelligent countenances, and by no means forbidding in their aspect.

Glass works at Hebron—their antiquity—but the manufacture tasteless and inferior: the principal is that of glass lamps for mosques, many of which are exported to Egypt. The furnaces are on a small scale, and extremely rude in their construction—We returned to Jerusalem barely in time to pass the Jaffa gate, which is kept open somewhat later than the other city gates, or till nearly half an hour after sun-set.

*Journey from Jerusalem to Beyrout.**September 8th, 1851.*

Left Jerusalem at about 4 p.m. for Nablous, the ancient Neapolis, Sychar, or Sichem—Beautiful parting view of Jerusalem, after gaining the hill-top beyond the Damascus gate—Encamp for the night at Beereh after passing several villages, one of which is called Ramah. Tomb of the prophet Samuel at Ramoth—Stony nature of our camping ground, and extreme hardness of our couches.

*September 9th.* General character of the country between Jerusalem and Nablous—chalky nature of the soil—Want of trees, the great defect. Arrive at Nablous after dark—Extreme beauty of its situation in a valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, the mounts of blessing and cursing &c.

Jotham's parable delivered from Mount Gerizim—Full moon, its fine effect on Mount Ebal—Great number of jackdaws, hooting owls and jackals.

*September 10th.* Visit the town of Nablous—extreme solidity of the masonry of the vaulted houses, and long arched passages. Visit the Bishop of Jerusalem's school, but few scholars there, it being the anniversary of the beheading of St. John the Baptist.

Community of Samaritans at Nablous, between forty and fifty heads of families. Visit to their place of worship:—Ancient copy of the Pentateuch in Samaritan characters.

Search for Jacob's well, the scene of our Saviour's conversation with the woman of Samaria—unsatisfactory results of our enquiry. Joseph's Sepulchre—its condition—Hebrew inscriptions on the wall within.

Leave Nablous for Sebaste (now Sebasta) the ancient Samaria, distant about two hours, at 12 noon—Accompany a party of Arab travellers nearly to Sebasta—General character of Samaritan scenery—Extremely chalky nature of the soil—Fine situation of Sebasta on a hill—ancient church—finely chiselled ornaments in the dome—Rows of columns a little way out of the village, the remains of the fine structures with which Herod adorned Samaria.

Leave Sebasta for Jebba about two hours and a half distant—Encamp in an olive grove for the night—hard bed, and disturbed slumbers—Dead horses close to the village—Fine and pleasing features of the Syrians of Palestine—Armed peasants.

*September 11th.* Start at half past seven a.m. on our way to Nazareth, said to be by numerous enquiries along the road four, five, six, seven hours distant, we found it ten!! Fine undulating hills, but general want of wood (olives excepted). Gennin—bad character of the place—a few date palms here, bearing fruit—Enter the plain of Esdraelon—its deceptive extent—Ascent of the mountains to Nazareth, where we arrived about six o'clock—Lofty situation of the place above the plain of Esdraelon—Latin convent—excellent accommodations at—Pleasing appearance of Nazareth on approach.

Church of Annunciation on the spot where that event is reported to have taken place—Miraculously supported pillar—House of Joseph asserted here to have been carried by angels to Loretto—Grotto behind the church, said to have been occupied by a female friend of Joseph and Mary, and who took care of their house during their seven years absence in Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod—Workshop of Joseph—Fountain of the Virgin Mary—the approach to this spring was probably often

trodden by the feet of our Saviour—Nazarene girls filling their pitchers:—fairness and beauty of countenance observable amongst them—Filth of the place—carcasses of horses &c. lying about—Evidences of the earthquake which shook Palestine a few years back to its centre, in the cracked walls of many houses in Nazareth—Turkish family, hareem, &c. of an officer of rank, Mustapha Bey, in the Latin convent.

*September 12th.* Excursion to Mount Tabor—leave Nazareth at 12 noon, and arrive at the summit of the mountain in two hours and a half—Description of the Mount, which tradition asserts to have been that of the Transfiguration—Beautiful arborescent vegetation on its northern declivity, principally oaks, Carob, Storax, (*Styrax officinalis*) Turpentine and Mastic trees. Ancient building on the summit, strongly fortified, and defended against the Roman army under Vespasian, by the historian Josephus—Magnificent view from the summit over the surrounding country—the plain of Esdraelon—the valley of the Jordan—Sea of Tiberias or of Galilee—the mountains of Israel beyond Jordan—Bason, Endor, and Nain—hazy state of the atmosphere—delightful temperature on the Mount, and at Nazareth, to which place we returned, to our hospitable quarters in the Latin convent, and to a late dinner—slight report of robbers in a road at the foot of the Mount.—Return by a village under the hills, and by an excessively steep and slippery descent.

*September 13th.* Leave Nazareth for Mount Carmel—Finely wooded hills of moderate height, and rounded outlines—Trees principally oaks of fair size as on Mount Tabor (the principal species being one with a leaf somewhat resembling that of the beech, and with acorns in a deep cup covered with curved scales), the other trees



being generally Lentils and Carobs with large bushes of Storax as undergrowth. Pass two farms where men were winnowing corn by throwing it up in the wind with a kind of wooden fork—Pass a well at sun-set with Syrian maidens drawing water, profusion of hair on the forehead—Syrian agriculture—Sessame, cotton, small breed of horned cattle, goats, sheep rare—difficulty of procuring milk in Syria and in Palestine—its indifferent quality at Jerusalem.

Cross the brook Kishon, “that ancient river, the river Kishon” before coming to Caiffa; pass through and ascend Mount Carmel, which we reached about 8 p.m.

*Mount Carmel near St. John d’Acre, Latin Convent,*

*September 15th, 1851.*

I am now arrived at another resting place, perched on the summit of that hill, the scene of more than one event in the life of Elijah, in quarters noted amongst all travellers for their comforts, and commanding one of the finest sea views perhaps in the world. I intend trespassing no longer on the hospitality of the worthy Carmelite brethren than to day, hoping to start very early to-morrow before day break ) for Acre and Tyre: the next day, for Saida (Sidon); and on the following, I trust, if it please God, to arrive at Beyrout with no greater let or hindrance than I have yet experienced since I entered Syria.

Fra Carolo, the superior, his affability to travellers, and literary acquirements—his zeal in raising funds for the church, a handsome structure, the design by a lately deceased brother, who also superintended the execution:—Convent library.

Splendid view from the summit of Carmel, which however is a hill of moderate elevation—Semicircular plain at the foot of the Mount, on which are visible the ruins of ancient Porphyron, so called from its fishery of the Tyrian Purple—Kaiffa—Acre—Capo Bianco to the northward, and to the south, Castel Pelegrina jutting into the sea—Elijah's Grotto, as usual, made into a chapel.

Mount Carmel is a range of hills, rather than one mountain. Probably more wooded, and with trees of a larger growth formerly than at present: still the forest of Carmel may be said to exist in our day.

*September 16th.* Leave Mount Carmel to pursue my route northwards—Pass through Caiffa a second time, by day-light, a place of some little trade. Noble olives on the descent to Caiffa—coast road to Acre—Fine ride of four hours along the sands to that place—Delightful sea breeze.

Acre, a vile hole (notwithstanding its rather imposing aspect on approach)—good bazaars—sickly appearance of the population, and their forbidding features. Unable to see much of the place—Set off with a guide for Bassa near the foot of Capo Bianco, and arrive at the camping ground after dark, by a spring of water, and some swampy spots, adjoining fruit gardens—Ruined arch, and fine aqueduct a little way out of Acre, the latter an ancient work.

*September 17th.* Start at 8 a.m. for Tyre—Rugged ascent to Capo Bianco—Perfectly chalky nature of the rock in many places. Temperate weather—Peasantry not armed with guns as in the south, the sale of powder and shot being prohibited in this part of Syria by the local government—Solomon's mills, *Ras el Ain* (said to be fed by Artesian wells) their evident antiquity—Enormous Nebr tree (*Zizyphus Spina Christi*).

Arrive at Tyre (Arab Sur) about 2 p.m.—size and trade of the town.—Few remains of the ancient city—consist chiefly of columns lying about in various parts. Encroachments of the sea as evidenced by fragments of an ancient wall, now many yards from the shore.—Wanton destruction by the Turkish government of the remains of a fine Christian church, to serve for building materials at Beyrout. Less clear atmosphere on the sea coast than inland.

*September 18th.* Leave Tyre at 10 a.m. for Sidon: arrive shortly after sun-set, or in about eight hours and a half. Graceful mode of salutation of the peasantry in this and other parts of Syria, by laying the hand on the forehead, and then on the heart. “Mahaleh” (Anglicè, “How are you?”), replaces here the “*Solumum Aleikon*” of Egypt. Country between Tyre and Sidon. High mountains of Gebil el Skeyk in the distance—Wells, fountains, and streams, frequent in Syria—Large herds of goats—Syrian Shepherds—wild Oleander. Fine situation of Sidon compared with Tyre, approach to Sidon between fine gardens of fig, orange, lemon, mulberry, pomegranate, &c. as at Jaffa, and rows of most magnificent tamarisks, not so much remarkable for their height, as for their girth and picturesque forms—French Khan—and so-called hotel of Madame Angelina.

Madame Angelina—her unangelic age and appearance—Excellent harbour of Sidon, but small trade of the town, consisting chiefly in the exportation of tobacco, and other products of the country—Excellent fruit of Sidon—Fine Curana trees.

*September 19th.* Leave Sidon at a quarter past eight a.m. for Beyrout—Fine appearance of Sidon from the shore—very warm day—road bad in places.

Arrive at Beyrout at half past seven p.m. somewhat fatigued by a long ride of eleven hours, in a very sultry day—Magnificent scenery of the Lebanon on the right, with its villages thickly scattered over the mountain sides, and fairly cultivated plains; the road amidst fruit gardens and mulberry plantations, for some miles before arriving at the town.

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## EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

OF THE

REV. JAMES BARNETT,

AND OF

MR. GEORGE MOORE.

From the date of the last Note, we have no clue to the movements of the writer, excepting through the letters of the Rev. J. Barnett and Dr. Paulding of the United Irish and American Presbyterian Mission at Damascus, (extracts from which are given), by which it appears that he left Beyrout on September 28th, sleeping that night at Zahleh, and arriving the next day at Baalbec, ill through long fasting; his servant having omitted to make the requisite provision for the journey. The following night he was seized with diarrhœa: from which he suffered without intermission until he reached, on the 1st October, the house of the Rev. J. L. Porter at Bludan, the summer station of the Mission, where he was assiduously attended by Dr. Paulding.

Efforts were made to dissuade one so unfit to travel, from proceeding to Damascus; but the combined illness of Mr. and Mrs. Porter, and probably the restlessness induced by fever, determined him to press on to that city.

The journey seems to have greatly increased the malady, and his recovery became humanly speaking, hopeless.

On reaching the Hôtel de Palmire, his symptoms were rapidly aggravated, and assumed the form of malignant Typhus: while the sufferer was watched day and night during the brief remainder of his life, with the kindest christian care, by the Rev. James Barnett, and by Mr. George Moore, an English traveller, who, under most trying circumstances, volunteered his help to a fellow countryman.

DAMASCUS,

*November 2nd, 1851.*

Dear Madam,

YOU will have learned ere this note reaches you, by a letter from Mr. George Moore, who was in Damascus at the time, that one who was very dear to you has gone the way of all the earth. Your brother died in this city on the 9th of October, at three o'clock in the morning. He had been ill for some time, and was labouring under a severe disorder. My brother-in-law, Dr. Paulding, had seen him at the summer residence of this Mission\* between Damascus and Baalbec, and had advised him not to hazard himself in his feeble state in this city. But having slightly recruited, he was anxious to complete his travels by a short visit here, and to be ready on his return to Beyrout to sail for home at the earliest date. He had a special desire to see Count Guyon the Hungarian General, who is a guest of the Sultan, at Damascus; but, by the time the Count called to see him, which he did promptly after his arrival, your brother was too far gone to recognize him. He had the attention of a good physician from the day he came to Damascus until his death: but with the utmost care and skill, all efforts for his recovery failed. He died very calmly, without a struggle, worn out by the exhausting influence of the disease.

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\* The Presbyterian Mission (of the American Board) at Damascus.

I cannot close this letter without expressing my hope, that your brother is at rest amongst the blest, and that this dispensation of Providence may be sanctified to all related to him, and to all who have had any connexion with him in life and at his death.

I would commend the special attention shewn to him by Mr. Moore.

I am, dear Madam,

Truly yours,

JAMES BARNETT.

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DAMASCUS,

*March 26th, 1852.*

Dear Madam,

ALTHOUGH your brother was very far gone when I first saw him, being much reduced by his disease (diarrhoea), and the fatigue of the previous day's ride, he truly impressed me most favourably by his amiable character, and won my deepest esteem and tenderest sympathy in his last illness and death. And be assured it gives me great pleasure to receive what you have related to me respecting him, and to find that I was not mistaken in what he appeared to be upon so short an acquaintance, and under circumstances so unfavourable. For, in general, a sick bed is I think, of all places the worst for one who wishes to deceive as to his real disposition.

The least attention paid to your brother was sure to draw from his lips the kindest expressions of gratitude, and when he ceased to speak, he would still by his smile manifest the grateful feelings of his heart, so that it was a real pleasure to shew him the least kindness.

Your brother arrived here on the 5th of October, late in the evening. I did not hear of his arrival until the next morning. He had that day travelled the whole way from Bludan, a small village on the side of the mountain east of Zebdany, and about half way between this place and Baalbec. He had left Bludan the same morning, and came by the way of Fÿeh (a village midway between this and Bludan), where he could not have rested long, if at all, as he arrived here the same evening. Fÿeh is at the second head of the Baroda, where almost the half of the river gushes out from beneath the mountain. The place is destitute of any accommodation for Europeans.

At Bludan, your brother had stopped at Mr. Porter's : Mr. Porter was confined to his bed, and your brother's servant was also ill. He thought that by coming on to Damascus he should be under more favourable circumstances for the recovery of his health ; and this reason, besides his impatience to complete his travels, were considerations which doubtless had much influence in bringing him, sooner than was prudent, to Damascus.

Mrs. Porter was struck by the evident kindness of his disposition. On some one finding fault with his servant for not being more attentive to him, ill as he was he took his part and palliated his conduct, saying, that the man himself was sick, which was indeed the fact ; but when sick ourselves we are too apt to forget such consideration for others.



Your brother arrived in Bludan on the 30th of September after nightfall. That day he had travelled from Baalbec, and was very ill: he attributed his state to a stimulating dinner which, after long fasting, he had eaten a few days before at Zahleh, on the road from Beyrout, in the mountains at the edge of the Bakka, Cælo Syria of the ancients. He was one day and two nights at Baalbec. Zahleh is one or two days from Beyrout according to the rate at which a person travels and the route which he pursues. The above dates take Dr. Bromfield back, very nearly, to the time when he was to leave Beyrout. Your brother, being informed of the uncertainty of his life, expressed his resignation to whatever should be the Divine will, and appeared to be fully aware that he might not recover. He appeared to be anxious about some book,\* but what was intended I do not know: it might be his journal, or some work on which he was engaged.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours truly, in the bonds of Christ,

JAMES BARNETT.

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\* This book was, doubtless, the "Flora of the Isle of Wight," upon which the most energetic study and research had been expended by him to the date of his departure from England.

HÔTEL PALMIRE, DAMASCUS,

10th October, 1851.

Madam,

IT is with the deepest regret that I have to apprise you of the death of your estimable brother, who yesterday left us for a better world.

I myself arrived at Damascus from Jerusalem on Monday, and, hearing that an Englishman lay dangerously ill at this hotel, I came and found your brother, who had arrived the day before from Baalbec, suffering from typhus of the most malignant description. Every thing that could be done for him both by medicine and attention was effected, and, not being able to obtain (through the superstitious fears of the people), any servant to wait upon him, we attended upon him by turns ourselves, and I cannot speak too highly of the unremitting kindness and attention shewn him by Mr. James Barnett, of the American Mission at Damascus, a truly pious young man. Three hours before his dissolution, Dr. Bromfield became sensible. Being in the room at the time, I spoke some familiar home words to him, which recalled him ; and, upon my asking him whether he had any wish to express, he desired his kindest remembrances to his dear sister, and ordered that all his effects should be sent to her. After that, he expressed a wish that the Bible should be read to him : having one fortunately with me, I complied with his request. He then became again insensible, and departed about two hours afterwards, with the sweetest expression of tranquillity upon his face.

In twelve hours from this sad event, we buried his body in the christian ground outside the city, and the utmost respect was shewn by all the Consuls, they either attending in person, or sending their cavasse. Afterwards, we made an inventory of his effects, and sealed his papers and portfolio, and delivered them to the Consul to be forwarded to you.

I have felt it my duty to write, and if Providence allows me to return home, which I hope to do by next January, I will, with the greatest pleasure come to you, should you wish to see me.

Regretting extremely the melancholy tidings I have imparted,

Believe me, my dear Madam,

Very respectfully yours,

GEORGE MOORE.

These sad records will be appropriately closed in the words of the Rev. Gerard Smith, and by the inscription, which he wrote for his friend's tomb in the Christian cemetery at Damascus :

“ His body rests in a land rich in the dust of the saints of God, whose living followers were found faithful in the care of the dying stranger, and had their rich reward in catching from his lips, and in tracing in his last faint and fevered moments, the sure and certain hope,—which made them, and bids us also, be of good cheer,—that his feet were on the Rock, and that his gentle spirit is now in heavenly rest.”

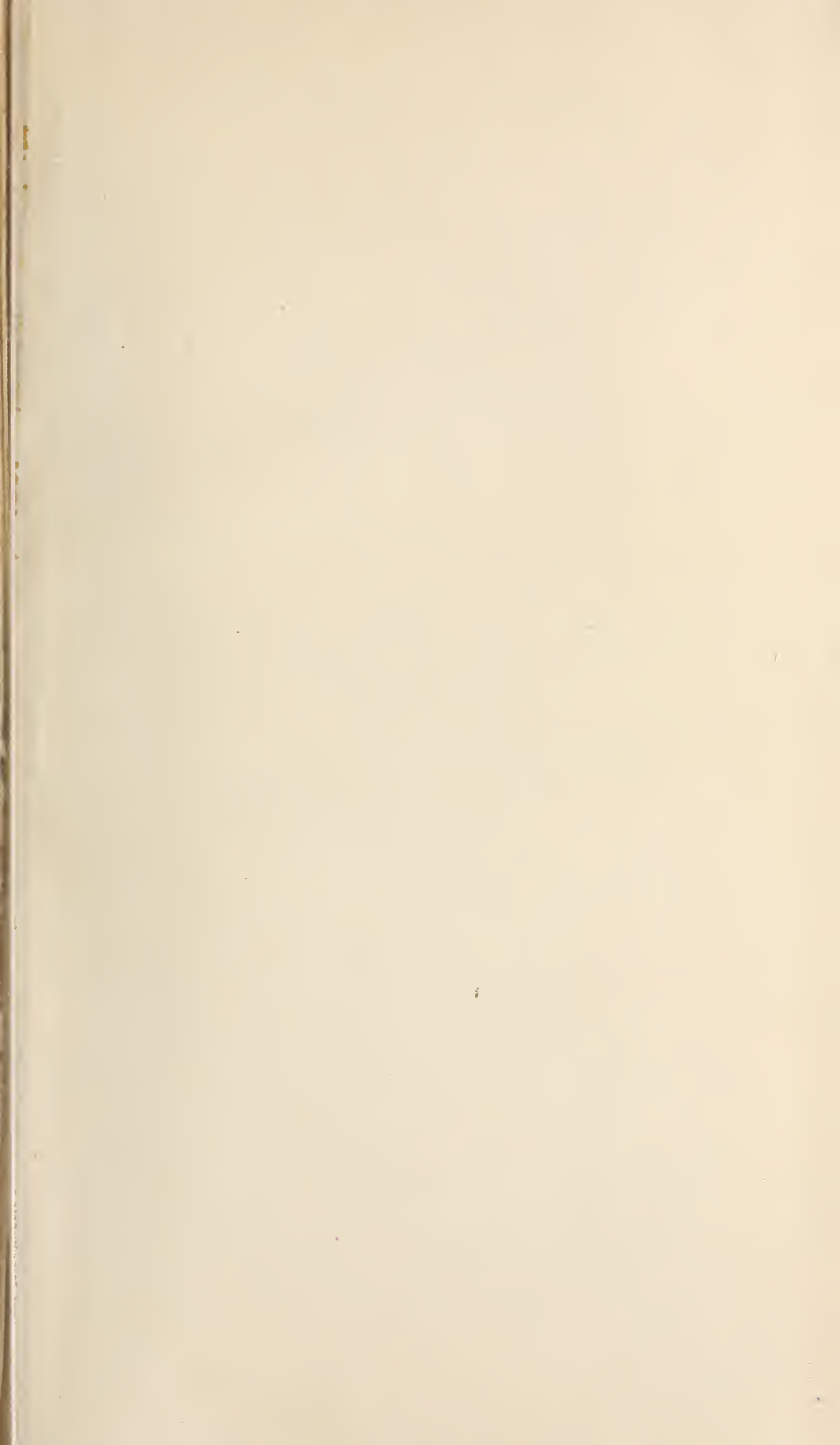
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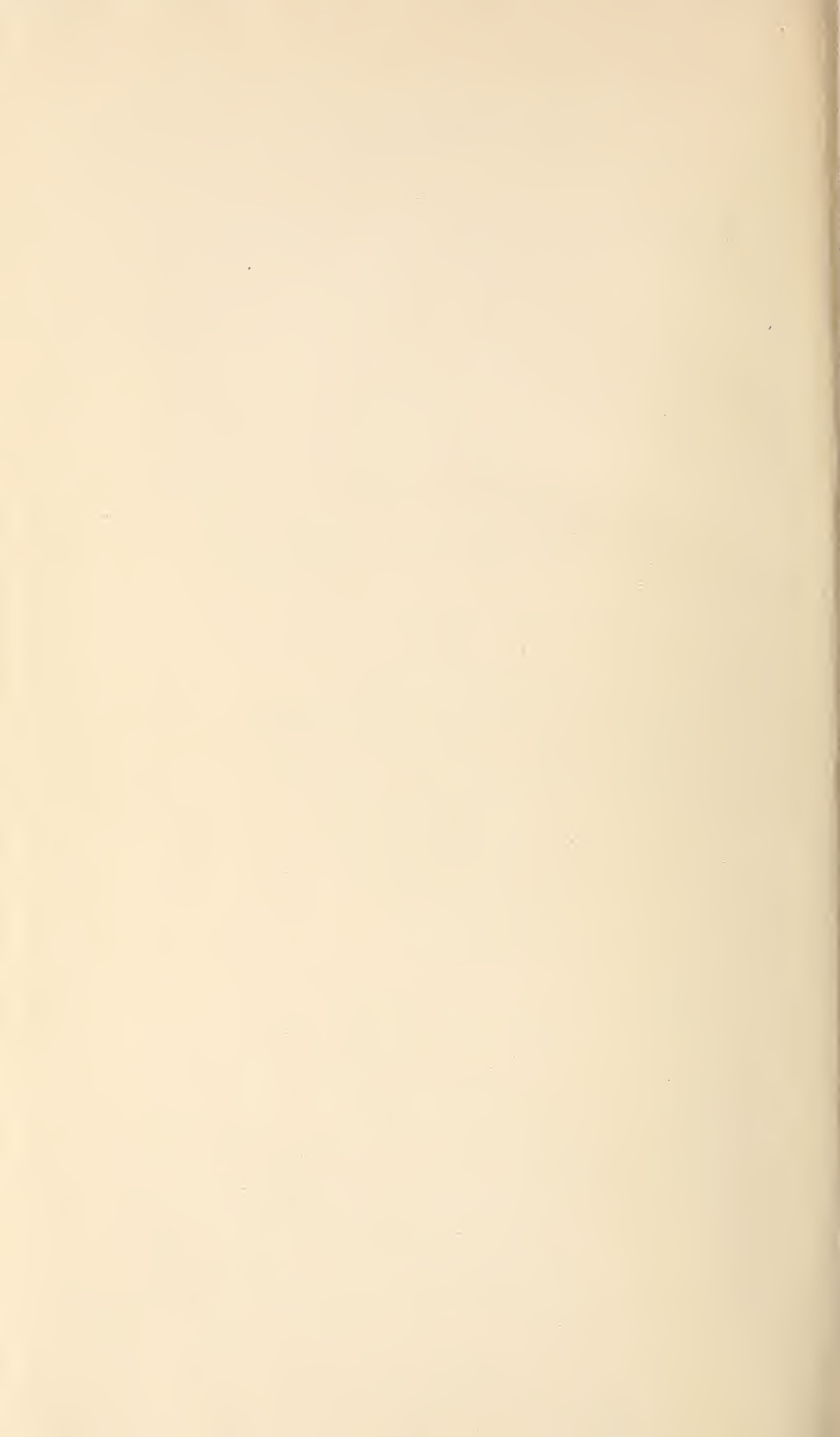
SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
WILLIAM ARNOLD BROMFIELD, M.D., F.L.S.,  
OF RYDE, IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT, ENGLAND.  
A MAN OF AN AMIABLE AND EXCELLENT SPIRIT,  
DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE,  
IN UNBLAMABLE INTEGRITY OF LIFE.  
HE DIED OF FEVER AT DAMASCUS,  
RESTING IN PEACE AND HOPE  
UPON THE LORD JESUS,  
IX. OCTOBER, MDCCCLII,  
AGED FIFTY YEARS.

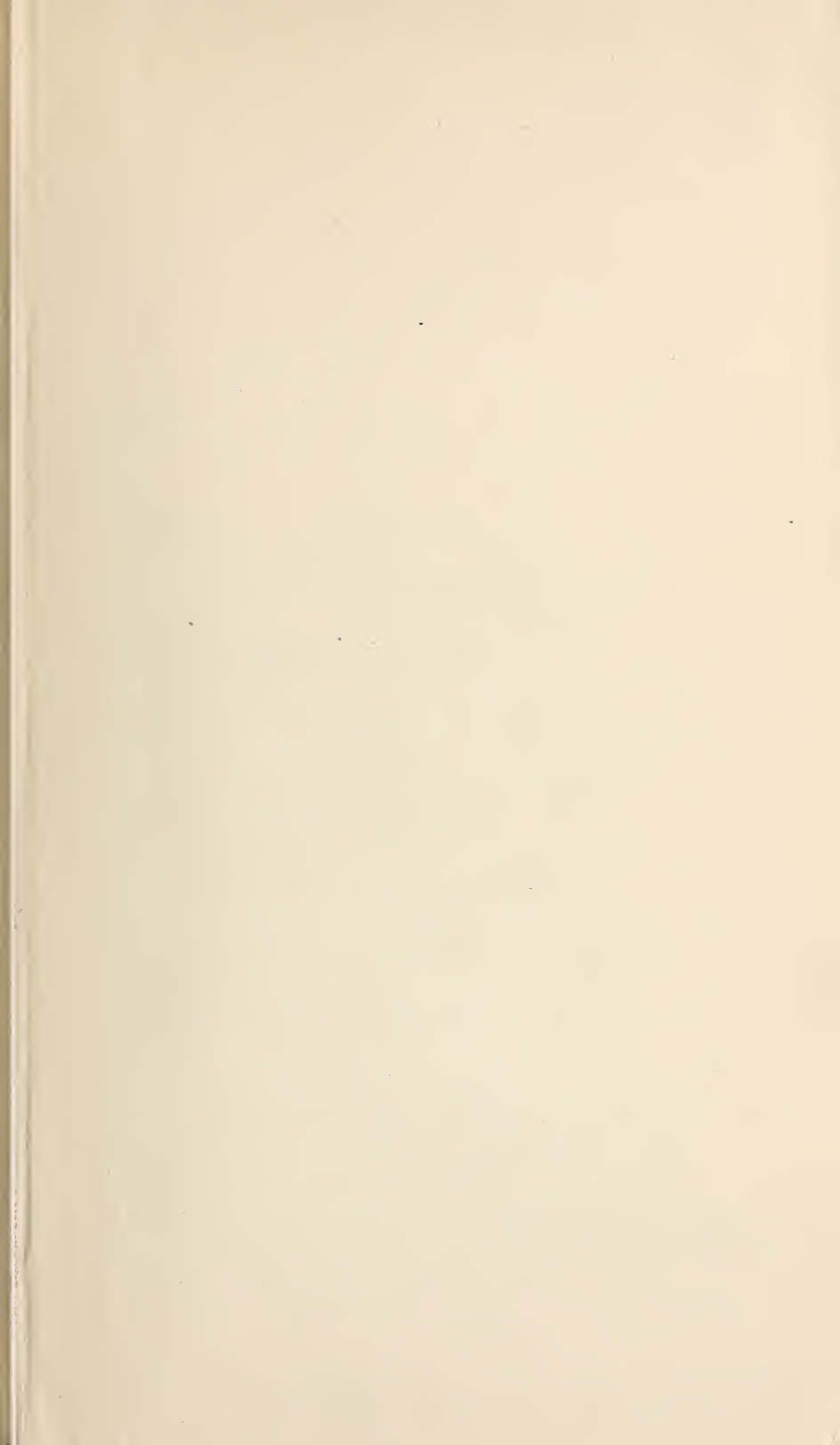
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